GOOD LORD! IT'S ALIVE!

EC LIVES!

wood. '72

GEORGE EVANS

1972 EC FAN ADDICT CONVENTION

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This book is dedicated to Bill Gaines for giving us E. C. and to all of the E. C. writers and artists for doing the best damn job in the world.

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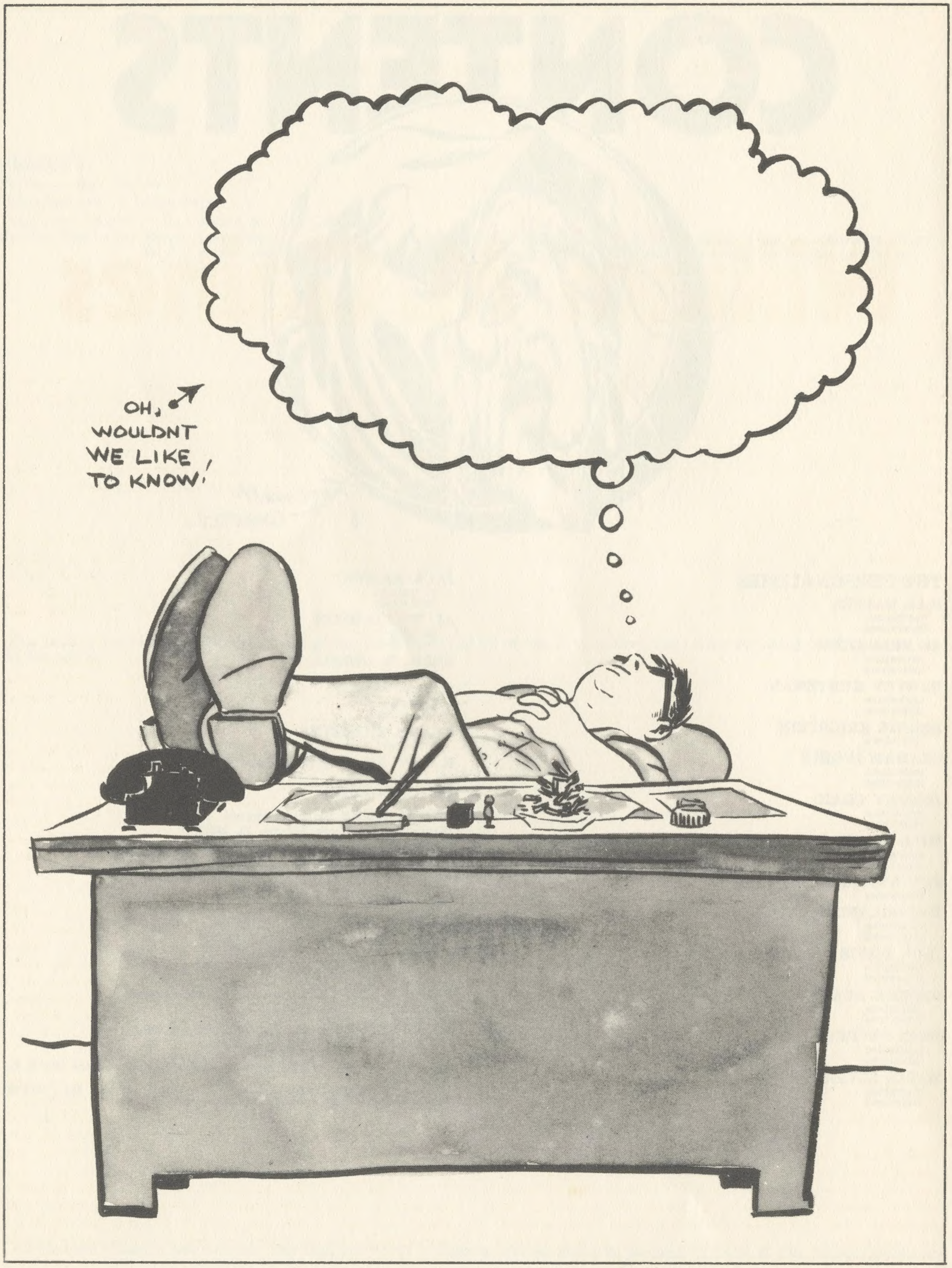
*All caricatures were originally drawn by Marie Severin for the 1953 E. C. Christmas party.
*All interviews about the E. C. personalities were taped from Jan., 1972 to April, 1972 and were subject to editing.


OH, WOULDNT WE LIKE TO KNOW!

“He always reminded me of an unmade bed.”

William M. Gaines

Al Feldstein: Bill Gaines is a creative publisher and there are very few creative publishers. Creativity in my mind encompasses many areas. It encompasses not only your own abilities, but the acknowledgement that your abilities end in one place and other peoples abilities take over. Bill allows the creative people around him to do their thing for him in a very free uninhibited atmosphere and that's why he's a successful publisher. There are too many publishers that get in the way of the talent that they're working with. There are too many publishers whose egos get in the way of talent, and surpress that very talent with their own narrow-mindedness. So in that way I think Bill is a fantastic man to work for... always has been.

I met Bill at about the same time he inherited the business from his father. Little by little the organization grew and with it came the influx of talented writers and artists who started to make money for Bill. Bill felt very paternal and protective towards them because he became personally involved with every one of them. He became involved with them as a creative person and also with their personal problems. He was unencumbered by his own personal problems generally since he was not married and his whole life was the production of E.C. Comics and the social aura that developed around it, in terms of the artists and writers. He would socialize with every one of the guys and became what I would call a liberal, benevolent capitalist. He was concerned with their well-being and so he developed this paternal attitude. Some people could work well under it and some people couldn't.

Marie Severin: Bill was never lazy and he was such a great audience. That's why he's so smart. He has respect for everybody... he listens to everybody, but he sizes you up while he's talking to you so God help you! Bill is also so very humane. I've never seen him do anything scroungy in the office. He was easy to work for... no sweat. Everybody always worked, there was no sloughing off as far as I could see, but that was because you felt like you wanted to do it.

Another interesting thing about Bill... he dressed then the way he thinks now and he looks and dresses now the way he thought then.

Jack Davis: I think I was always sort of afraid of Bill... in awe. I've always respected him and have been impressed by him as such a big good man.

Wally Wood: He's my buddy! It was always friendship. Bill is kind of hard to get close to, but I always felt that we understood each other. He was great as a boss! He used to loan us money without interest and if we were in trouble we'd go to him like big daddy. It was a little sick... this big happy family which is not exactly the way to run a business. If things go bad, there's a double feeling of let-down with a close family feeling.

I admired him and respected him. He got the best people in the business to work for him because he treated them decently. It meant a lot when you handed in a job and he handed you a check. In fact sometimes he handed you a check before you gave him the job, if you were short. Just having the check there when you were done was a big incentive and a load off your mind. That's why people knocked themselves out for him.

Harvey Kurtzman: First and foremost... very bright!.. an intellectual of sorts. He has an extremely brilliant methodical mind, what I regard as a mathematical mind. He was unusual in the comic field, relative to comics and E.C. in that he was able to apply democratic principles to the people he gathered and let them, in the vernacular, *do their thing*!

My long running quarrel with Bill was always that he was paternalistic, in that he had this feeling of responsibility for his people and possibly feeling a little too responsible. Like a father feels for his children... that's where I found our greatest friction derived from.

Will Elder: For many strange reasons I liked Bill. Bill was older than all of us, except for a few cases, and there was a paternal quality about Bill I liked. Bill, in order to express himself, fell into this paternal pattern... and I didn't resent it. After all Bill did look older, he was bigger, and he was richer. He was our rich father! Somehow I felt it was fitting because he was supporting us. Bill was always very generous, but at the same time he was very possessive as a father would be.

Roy Krenkel: I didn't know Bill that well. I used to see Bill occasionally and he always reminded me of an unmade bed. My impression of Bill is always that of an unmade bed... he was the originator of that term. He was an affable, crude character. He has got to be the most unmillionairely looking millionaire I know! A nice guy, but a real shambles... a walking catastrophe! He's one of the few guys I've ever met who makes me feel that I'm not a maladroit... by comparison only.

George Evans: When Al Williamson took me over to E.C. and I met Bill, he was most unpublisher like and unprofessional. I couldn't figure him as the man that moved all this stuff. It was like meeting an old friend of Al's and the minute after I had met him, he felt like an old friend of mine... I gather everybody felt the same... that's Bill.

Bill was a little too easy to work for, in that he didn't terrorize you if you didn't make a deadline or something. So in many ways he was too easy to work for, but you know... I worked harder for him than I ever did for anyone else so I guess there's a moral there.

WIGGLING HER WAY THRU THE TEST TUBES, MARSHA CAME TOWARD ME, WEARING A GLISTENING KNITTING NEEDLE CLUTCHED IN HER HAND - ARRGH! - I CHOKED WITH ANTICIPATION...OOOO

“I always felt Al was a reluctant dragon. He’d breathe fire but it was cold fire.”

Al Feldstein

Bill Gaines: When he first walked into the office we just took to each other. Within a year he was writing and drawing all of his own material and then shortly after that he was an editor. Soon after this he was writing everyone’s material. Al and I have had a long incredible association. We almost know what the other’s thinking after all these years.

One of the funniest things I remember is the way we used to create the stories and the stomach aches I would get. Since I was the springboard man I’d have literally hundreds and hundreds of story springboards stored mentally and we would sit down every morning to write a story. Well, Al and I would sit down and I would have to sell Al on one of my springboards... that’s what it amounted to. I would sit there trying to sell him on a springboard and after he had rejected the first 33 on general principles, he *might* show a little interest in number 34. I’d then give him the hard sell and he’d get going... he’d run into the next room and start working out the plot. He would normally write the story in 3 hours, breaking it down as he wrote it right onto the drawing board. Meanwhile I’d sit there busying myself with other things for 3 hours, but with a nervous stomach because I never knew if and when Al would come bursting back in and say, “I can’t write that Goddamn plot!”. By then it might be 2 in the afternoon and I knew we had to start all over again because we *must* have a story by 5 o’clock. It got kinda spooky every once in a while whenever Al simply couldn’t do it. One of the finest stories Al ever wrote was “MY WORLD” for Wally Wood which was the result of just such a terrible thing. He and I had batted out a plot and I guess it was a good one since he went in to write it. Well, when he came back he had “MY WORLD” which had nothing whatever to do with the original plot he had gone in to write. “MY WORLD” was actually a desperate substitution for a dreadful plot and it ended up as one of the all-time science fiction classics!

Marie Severin: Dedicated... a really good worker and a nice guy. He’s cute and he’s good to work with although he’s a little serious.

He used to always say something to tease me, but once I got back at him. I started to tease Al a bit on this occasion and he began to get upset and at just the right moment I said, “Why you!..” and I threw this bottle of disappearing ink all over his shirt. Well he couldn’t believe it... he stood there and said, “ARE YOU CRAZY??... MY SHIRT!... BILL, LOOK WHAT SHE DID!”, and as he’s talking to Bill, Bill’s starting to laugh because it’s disappearing... and Al’s still screaming, “YOU’RE CRAZY... WHAT AM I GONNA DO? ... I’M SOAKING WET... WHAT’S THE MATTER WITH YOU??”, and the whole time it’s disappearing and Bill’s laughing. Then Al looks down and it’s fading and fading and all it was was a wet shirt!

Another time we took this same disappearing ink and we waited for Al Williamson to come in with all of his zipatone and stuff piled up a mile high and of course we knocked over this bottle of blue ink on his latest pages. Al took one look and started yelling and screaming like it was the end of the world... like we had just killed his child. He walked out of the room like Hamlet... the whole bit! Naturally the ink disappeared and Al regained his sanity later on.

Jack Davis: One of the greatest editors of any magazine anywhere! He holds everything together. He’s a good man besides.

Wally Wood: He was one Hellava good writer... especially for the horror. Al’s Shock and Crime stories were the best ever done!

Harvey Kurtzman: Al is a well functioning good executive type. He was always able to do the job... to produce, and is very valuable because of it.

Will Elder: Al has a surface approach to humor. He knows what people want and he gives people what they want. And he’s usually pretty successful at it. He’s a genius at commercializing talent. He knows how to draw things out of people. He has that quality and ability.

I always felt Al was a reluctant dragon. He’d breathe fire, but it was cold fire. I felt Al wasn’t really harmful at all.

Al is a very social guy. He’s one of the most sociable guys I’ve ever met.

Roy Krenkel: I didn’t know Al that well, except when I would go in and see him and Bill. He always reminded me of Robert Ryan... his face and mannerisms... Robert Ryan mannerisms.

George Evans: Al had the most tremendous gift... he seemed to write each story in an individual way for the artist who was going to do it. I was fascinated just watching him work. Sometimes I’d go in to pick up a job and he’d still be working on it. It was just page after page of writing and breakdowns without any previous work... and it would come out even in the end! If he planned to write a seven page story he’d start writing away at page one, panel one and it would end just right, on page seven... without any outlines or anything else. I asked him one time, “Gee Al... How do you do it?” and he said, “I don’t even want to talk about it! I just have it all in my head and when it comes out even in the end I just say a prayer of thanks.”

WELL, NOW, **EXACTLY** WHAT DAY? IN 19 OUGHT 2? WELL, WE PUT OUT COMIC BOOKS HERE. SURELY! STRATEGICALLY, WHERE WAS THE LATRINE LOCATED? OH! YOU **DO**! WELL, NOW, WE'LL SEND YOU A COPY - THANKS, IKE - 'BYE - TAKE CARE! 'BYE... 'BYE...

“ If he was doing a story, he’d drive you crazy with research! ”

Harvey Kurtzman

Bill Gaines: Harvey Kurtzman is a tremendous talent of course. His war books were unsurpassed and probably always will be. His early Mads are still the subject of adulation by a group of very loyal fans who still feel that Harvey’s Mads were the best Mads ever.

Harvey and I were very close personal friends during all of that time. When it came to business, Harvey and I could never quite understand each other. It was as if we were talking two different languages. It’s difficult to explain... I would sit there and talk to Harvey and he would hear something else. We were marching to different drummers and I think this led to our difficulties somewhat... we just simply couldn’t understand each other’s point of view.

Harvey and I are now very friendly and I don’t see that much of him, but when I do it’s on good terms. The probability is that we still don’t understand each other, but we don’t see that much of each other to know it anymore.

Some of the most pleasant nights of my life were spent sitting in front of Harvey’s roaring fire in that old haunted house that he used to live in with the cellar and sub-cellar.

Al Feldstein: Harvey’s way of working, I was totally opposed to. He would supply the artists with tissue overlays of exactly the layout that he wanted in each panel. To me, it was apparent that he frustrated, distracted, and limited the artists own abilities which may have surpassed Harvey’s... as I believed the artist’s abilities surpassed mine.

I thought Harvey was an extremely talented man. I also thought that he needed a certain amount of discipline and a certain amount of guidance and comfortable discussion as to where he might be going off half cocked.

I think that his best years creatively were with E.C. I’m sorry that we lost Harvey. I think that from a raw talent point of view Harvey was one of the greatest talents in the comic industry.

I recall long knock-down drag-out discussions with Harvey on a theoretical, philosophical level as to what were the elements that were important to the work we were doing. Harvey wanted to do something that was up-lifting. He would bog down on the minutest detailed investigations of his story background material. If he was doing a submarine story in his war book he would go to a submarine, he would read about submarines, he would examine every nut and bolt, gauge and reel and then he’d write a story. We had great arguments in this area since I felt the plot and the character developments were the most important aspects of a story.

Marie Severin: Harvey used to send me to armories with a knap-sack to do research. In the 1950’s, if a girl had a knap-sack there was something radically wrong. He used to send me there all day, with my camera to take pictures of a bazooka or some such thing which really didn’t interest me. He used to send me to all sorts of crazy places and I would wear out a pair of shoes in a week. He was interesting to work for because you never knew where you were going to end up. If he was doing a story, he’d drive you crazy with research.

Jack Davis: Harvey was always making sure that everything was just right. He was always very meticulous with his work and is a very talented guy.

He’s a fantastic artist, but he’s a perfectionist. I think he should back off and loosen up a bit.

Wally Wood: I quit working for Harvey twice. I wasn’t exactly going to quit, but I had a fight with Harvey once and Bill had to be the peace-maker and talk Harvey and me back together again. Then, one time I kinda sounded out to Bill, and then Harvey had to be the peace-maker.

Harvey had a very annoying way of criticizing your work... he would never pick on anything specific, he’d just say, “Gee, it seems like you really didn’t feel this one.”... vague stuff like that. How do you respond to that? I responded by quitting. I don’t want to work for him anymore. He’s never easy to work for.

I like Harvey and I admire him and respect him, but he’s a hard man... he’s a tyrant. He’s gotta have everything his way, which I suppose I admire in a way too.

Will Elder: Harvey’s always been a great part of my life. If I had a brother, Harvey would be him. He’s been a tremendous influence on me, he’s made me work very hard which I’m not inclined to do. That’s the tremendous power Harvey has over me.

Harvey’s picky attitude irritated me at one time, but after I realized why he was like that I didn’t have any regrets. I think he has always been ahead of a lot of us and was demanding. I think most people resent anyone being demanding, especially when you’re an artist and you want to give expression to your own thoughts and your own talents. Naturally, there was some resentment on my part, but it was overcome by the fact that it made me work harder.

Harvey is always a source of revelation in the sense that he has always had people of the strangest background appear at his house at all hours of the day or night. I would call

on him occasionally and I'd see someone answer the door, and I'd think, "My God... he's moved!" These strange people would answer the door and they took everything for granted. They welcomed me into the house, they sat me down, they offered me something to eat or drink, and I'd think, "What's going on? He sold himself to the devil." I think that's the amusing part of Harvey, but that's part of Harvey's background. Harvey has always seen the delightful side of people. He would extract the better part of people out of themselves, without them being aware of it. Harvey has this gift of drawing out the better qualities of the individual.

Roy Krenkel: To this day he can't blame me for this, but I'm greatly tied-up in paleontology and one of the classic books on paleontology was a work called *THE HISTORY OF LAND MAMMALS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE* in which is reproduced a ground sloth which looks precisely like Harvey Kurtzman. Or is it the other way?... Harvey Kurtzman looks like the ground sloth... which may or may not be flattering to Harvey or the sloth.

I didn't know Harvey in any real sense of the word. I was under the impression that he was a charming and erudite guy. Sort of preoccupied... absentminded is my impression. It would be utterly impossible to dislike Harvey. He was a guy nobody could dislike.

George Evans: I did a lot of work for him and I still wonder if he was pleased with anything I did. He always gave me these completely detailed layouts and at some point I would vary from his layout. When I would take the job back to him he must have remembered every dot that he put on the paper and his hand would go up and rub over his head in a calamitous gesture. I'd wonder what was wrong, but he'd go on to the next page. He would never say a thing when he saw my changes, but after it was published he'd reveal that I had desecrated his story.

I'm amazed that he got into LITTLE ANNIE FANNY though. It's a little risque. During E.C. we used to have discussions about policy and Harvey was outraged at some of the scandalous things that Al Feldstein was doing and writing. Evidently, he saw the light and was converted.

“From the point of view of trying to get the thing out in a standardized position he drove us crazy.”

Bernie Krigstein

Bill Gaines: Many people feel that Bernie was the finest artist that E.C. had. There's no question that he was a fine artist and as a matter of fact, I think that's what he's been into lately.

Bernie was the most difficult to work with because he was so strong-minded. Whereas most of the boys were able to adapt themselves to working within the framework of Al's breakdowns, this drove Bernie Krigstein out of his mind. If you closely examine *Master Race*, you'll see that what Bernie ended up with is certainly not what Feldstein started out with. The panels are broken up in a strange way under the captions. Where Al had one panel in mind, Bernie turned it into 2 or 3 or 4. The result, of course was brilliant, but he drove us crazy. He'd take the stories as we did them and would chop them up into little pieces and re-paste them down into other shapes and formats. In retrospect, he was right and we were wrong I suppose, but from a point of view of trying to get the thing out in a standardized position he drove us crazy. Some of the very finest stuff we published, Bernie did.

George Evans: He was one hellava talent. He wanted to do things in his own way and I think his own way proved to be pretty acceptable. Bernie would come in and would want to change the story to his way and at that point I think Al would get as close to mad as I would see him. After Al had worked on a story, he didn't want it fiddled around with.

I recall, at least the accusation was, that Bernie would take the Leroy lettered captions and cut them up into little one line sentences and do all these minute little drawings of his that were almost animated. They were effective story telling. He was giving it the Krigstein interpretation.

YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES THOSE STORIES MAKE ME SICK!

“Once Al Williamson and I bumped into Graham and we immediately went into a bar and started to lather-up!”

Graham Ingels

Bill Gaines: In the early days of E.C. we had Graham typecast into the Western books and when we started the love books we used him there for a few stories, but he didn't seem to fit. When we started the Horror titles we didn't use Graham because we thought he'd be good at it, we used him because whenever an artist came into the fold we had to use him for something. So we just stuck Ingels into the Horror books and it didn't take us very long to realize what had happened...that Ingels was Mr. Horror himself.

Al Feldstein: When we did a Graham Ingels script, we did gothic, gooky, horror stories to fit his kind of interpretations. Ingels was totally involved in his life and his work. His own personal and emotional problems were visited upon by us, in terms of his attitudes and reactions to things. And yet there were times when Graham was just the greatest guy in the world.

Ingels was trapped in his own personal technique and he was trapped by the thinking of the editors before E.C. Wherever he worked he was forced to work in the accepted comic styles to please the editors. So he struggled and bastardized his own natural technique to create the accepted styles in comics. When he came to E.C. we didn't set up these limitations...we encouraged him to develop his own screw-ball hairy black and white style. That's why he developed the way he did and that's why his work stands out. Whether it was a good story or bad story, Graham Ingels' work stands out because of his technique which was a product of his total make-up...his physical, psychological, emotional make-up.

Jack Davis: He was a very quiet fellow. He was such a great painter. I think he was a better painter than he was a cartoonist. Most people never knew how fantastically Ingels could paint. His horror stuff was extremely good though because it was very arty and it had a mood all it's own.

Wally Wood: We didn't get together socially, but whenever we got together at an office party we hit it off great! A couple of times he and I went out drinking after the party was over. He was really very normal, serious and hard working. What striked me about him was his normalness compared to the stuff he was doing.

Harvey Kurtzman: Ingels was an extremely good natured guy...very philosophical...always concerned with the deeper meaning of life. There was an honesty about Graham that was very refreshing. Unfortunately Graham had weaknesses and I think his weaknesses won out, but his intentions were good.

Will Elder: Graham liked me. I know I made him laugh an awful lot so perhaps that's why he liked me. Graham would laugh at the slightest provocation or slightest inclination of any kind of humor that I had within me. He liked to laugh...liked to have a good time. In that sense he kind of rubbed off on me.

He wasn't very sociable...unless he was drinking and he got into the mood. If he liked a person he would walk over and kind of stay with them at a party or gathering. Whenever he came to E.C., I never took him seriously...he seemed to be whimsical...and didn't care much about what he did. He would put himself down. I always felt there was something deeper in his work than was actually on the paper. What we saw on the paper was something entirely different from what the man was doing and thinking.

Roy Krenkel: I only met him once. I think it was in the Times Square area around 42nd street. Al Williamson and I bumped into Graham and we immediately went into a bar and started to lather-up!

George Evans: Since Graham lived out here on Long Island at the time of E.C., we got to exchanging lots of things. We used to spend a lot of time together and he would immediately crack out the beer or wine and we would sit and talk about everything.

My family and I used to go over to Graham's for a barbecue once in a while and before we started eating I would be so bleary from drinking that I wouldn't know what I was finally eating. And old Graham...he'd keep the drinks coming...and coming. I'd try to knock off one while Graham would have finished 2 or 3 cans of beer and he'd take a look at me and shake my can and say, “You're not keeping up!”...and BOY what an effort to keep up!

I remember one time when we were over there and my daughter Janis, who was five at the time, wanted something to drink. Well naturally all that Graham had was beer, so Janis came over to me and had a sip of beer, but when I wouldn't let her have anymore she went over to Graham. So Graham and Janis started splitting bottles until they both got all boozed-up and she fell asleep in his lap. It was such a picture...here was Ghastly Graham with this little kid huddled up in his lap with a big smile on her face...and a big smile on Graham's face and he's saying, “She's a sweet kid.”

OH, BOY- AM I DEAD! DID A PANEL TODAY!

66 It was funny to see him doing horror stories... cleanest horror stories you ever saw! 99

Johnny Craig

Bill Gaines: John was and is a prince. John had a whole different style. John was the clean, almost pristeen look. When John did a Horror story or a Crime Suspense or Shock Suspense type story the contrast between the beautiful clean, charming artwork and the dreadful things which eventually happened at the tip of his pen added to the effect. In the new CRYPT movie everyone has commented on how the very first segment of the movie which was originally a Craig story, opens up with the beautiful, lovely tinkeling Christmas tree and the Christmas music which suddenly becomes the background for a brutal murder is typical of Craig and it's almost like the director captured Craig's artwork and put it into the set.

John was very, very slow because he was a very, very careful craftsman. I imagine that he's just as careful and just as slow now as he ever was.

Al Feldstein: I admired Johnny's artwork, I wish that I could draw like Johnny Craig. He was slick and finished and was my ideal of where I'd like to go with my artwork.

Johnny was extremely talented, but he had no real drive. Either monetarily or from the ego point of view. He was slow in his artwork and therefore his income was limited. We collaborated for awhile and signed it F.C. Aljohn. This goes back before the Horror comics when we were both working for Bill doing our own things in the Crime books..before the development of *The Crypt of Terror*. The Love books and Crime books had some stories that were done by F.C. Aljohn which was Feldstein, Craig, Al and John. I penciled and John would ink it. He would straighten out my lousy drawing and I at least was going hell bent ahead on the drawings, doing the breakdowns in my very simple interpretations of the story. It didn't help much and sort of petered out.

Johnny was fun to have around and was always friendly and a gracious person.

Marie Severin: One of the nicest people you'd ever want to meet. Really great and so neat. He would embarass me cause everything was so neat. I used to tell him that maybe that's why you're slow...everytime you use something, you clean it. A nice person...a gentleman right down the line.

Jack Davis: Johnny Craig was always a hard worker and very neat.

Wally Wood: He was really very nice and a good guy, but I always felt he didn't belong in comics though. He didn't seem happy with it. For one thing, he was very slow. It was hard for him to draw, it was very painful watching him work. He was struggling with it all the time. He was so precise and so clean. It was funny to see him doing Horror stories...cleanest Horror stories you ever saw! He had a very exact way of working.

Harvey Kurtzman: He was a gentleman, very reserved.

Will Elder: Craig was a very likable guy. He's a very pleasant guy. He was very quiet, very friendly, and very amiable. He was an excellent worker when he did work. I liked him more socially than to admire his work.

OH BLESS THE MASTER
OF THIS HOUSE...
THE MISTRESS, BLESS ALSO...
AND ALL THE LITTLE CHILDREN
THAT ROUND THE TABLE GO...
GOD BLESS EVERYBODY
IN THIS OFFICE!

“He actually sent his wife a heart out of a slaughter house for Valentine’s Day!”

Will Elder

Bill Gaines: Will Elder was unquestionably the nuttiest guy that ever walked in the doors here. He not only inked Johnny Severin’s stuff, but then branched forth on his own and probably became the most popular artist in MAD.

As good as he is as an artist, I think Will’s principle claim to fame has got to be his personality. He actually sent his wife a heart out of a slaughter house for Valentine’s Day! He’s just a complete maniac and a lot of fun to work with.

Al Feldstein: Willy was a natural comic. He performed this natural ability under the guidance of Harvey, and he preferred it that way. Obviously Willy needed someone to sit over him, to tell him what to do and pat him on the head and tell him that’s great.

When Willy was working with Severin, he again was under his control so that Willy was never able to flourish by himself. I think that if Willy had not gone with Harvey when he left MAD, and had stayed with us, Willy would have developed into a fantastic humor artist. Not that he isn’t a fantastic humor artist today, it’s just that it isn’t Willy Elder by himself. He’s Willy Elder and Harvey Kurtzman and that really isn’t the end. I never really saw Willy Elder by himself develop and I think that this is a terrible waste of talent.

Personally, as a human being, Willy was a hysterical individual. He was always “ON”...was always performing. It’s too bad that he wasn’t allowed to be that individual in his work, as he was out of his professional career.

Marie Severin: Will used to have this painting of a deer... I guess it was one of those 5¢ and 10¢ store things. It had a deer, a mountain, some trees, a path, flowers and the like... and he’d change it for the seasons! If it was Winter he would paint snow on the deer, and then he would paint over that and put the sun out for the springtime with flowers coming up.

He was the type of person who would order some milk and cake and if they took too long to serve him he would mix the milk and cake in the glass when he got it to hurry things up! Anything to be funny. What a mind...or what an absence of a mind!

Jack Davis: Willy was always a practical joker and a very excitable kind of a guy. He was always doing something. One time he was driving his car and he had to signal for a left turn. Well, he had this deer’s foot with him and when he signalled for the turn he stuck out this deer’s foot with his coat sleeve covering his hand and it really looked like a deer was driving! He could have been a comedian I think.

Wally Wood: Crazy Willy...what can I say? One thing though...whenever I got him alone, he was always very serious.

Harvey Kurtzman: Willy was a maniac when he was young. I have Will Elder stories that could fill a book! He was a spontaneous madman when he was young...you’d never know it now because he’s a very quiet, controlled guy.

The best of the worst stories that I remember about Will was one he told me himself. He used to play with the other kids in these freight yards that were in his neighborhood and they happened to break into a refrigerator car full of fresh meat. Willy got this brilliant idea to get his playmates up to collecting clothes in the neighborhood. Well, these kids collected a bunch of clothes and they dressed the meat in the clothes and spread the combination of meat and clothes along the right-of-way for about a half a mile on the railroad tracks. Then Willy started shrieking at the top of his voice that Mikey had fallen down onto the railroad tracks. Naturally every woman for miles around who had a son named Mike went out of her mind...seeing this mess of clothes and meat along the tracks. Finally, the police came and collected all of this meat in baskets and took it away to the morgue. This was the kind of kid Willy was.

Willy and I went to school together and he had a teacher by the name of Mr. Sayers. This teacher was one of these hyper-tense nervous guys with trembling fingers and all. One day Willy was absent from class and at the end of the day all of the kids went to these huge clothes closets with big sliding doors to get their coats. Sure enough when the kids opened the doors, there was Willy...HANGING ON A COAT HOOK! His face had been whitened with chalk dust and Mr. Sayers nearly passed out thinking Willy had committed suicide!

One of Will's earliest memories as a kid was this time he had an old gramaphone record player with a turn-table and he set about cutting out paper figures of a man and a woman... a man chasing a woman with a bread knife! He put the figures on the edge of the turn-table and they would go round and round. Then he'd project the figures onto the window shade and would see the woman go by and then the man with the bread knife would go by and all the while Willy would be yelling and screaming and everybody outside would see this madness.

One day Willy was coming home from a football game or something and he decided to rip up his clothes and to sprinkle ketshup over himself. At the time his mother was having a whole house full of company and all of a sudden there came a scratching at the door. When the door opened, in came Willy...and he really looked like he had been torn and bleeding! He carried the act so far that his mother actually called an ambulance and by this time Willy was too afraid to reveal the fact that nothing was wrong with him. When the ambulance came to take him away he *still* wouldn't explain the joke. Finally the doctor examined him and said, "There's nothing wrong with this guy!"

Willy used to have this trick where he'd set his finger on fire! He'd do it by dipping his finger into a jar of rubber cement and then he'd casually light it and walk around the studio with this big torch on the end of his finger. One day he did it and it burned so Willy began to shake his finger and these flaming torches shot to all parts of the room. The rubber cement flew like flaming globs of Napom and our whole studio was on fire.

The absolute worst Willy story came while he was in the Army. A friend and he had been eating goulosh for dinner and they filled up a hot-water-bottle full of this goulosh and his friend hid the bottle under his shirt and they went into the town. Well, they went into a local bar and started drinking. At the appropriate moment Willy's friend pushed up the goulosh!... But that's not the punch-line!...The punch-line came when Willy began eating the goulosh.

But he's not like that anymore. He now puts all of that crazyness into his work.

George Evans: When you were first introduced to him, you'd think that he was a very quiet guy...obviously hard working, sober and intense. Then somebody would say something funny and that would lead him to something funny. From that point on, as Marie Severin said, "All you have to do is scratch the surface the right way."

66 He claimed that he saw a flying saucer go over his area in Brooklyn and drop a pork chop bone on his head. 99

Roy Krenkel

Bill Gaines: Roy never officially worked for me. Roy did a lot of work for Williamson and for my own piece of mind it was simpler for me not to have known or cared who did Williamson's work. I just assigned it to Williamson, I got it from Williamson and I paid Williamson. If occasionally somebody else's name popped up on the work, it didn't matter to me, I don't care. As far as I'm concerned Williamson's job is Williamson's job. But I know that Krenkel did a lot of the background and machinery and he was a brilliant artist for what he did. Complimented Williamson very well.

Roy is a very nice guy. I don't know him that well. I haven't seen him more than a dozen times in my life. If he could have settled down and worked, he probably could have been tremendously successful, but this wasn't important to him. Roy kind of dropped out before anybody even created the term, "drop-out." That's the way he wanted to live his life and that's the way he did and who's to say he was wrong? Maybe he was right and we're wrong.

Wally Wood: He's a wild man! He's really very good too. The last time I saw him he was just the same. It's funny, he looked the same in school. We went to Hogarth School together. I can picture him being born looking just the way he does now, only smaller.

He's fun to have around, but I can't work with him. I tried to work with him once but he was always getting up and stalking around the room and making speeches. Then he'd draw a panel that would take me all day to ink. I tried to limit him to one panel on a page, but that panel would take longer to ink than the rest of the page!

There really isn't a place for him. A few years ago there might of been when there were still pulp magazines. He doesn't really fit in comics. He'd starve to death if he had to depend on this for his entire living.

George Evans: Al Williamson brought Roy Krenkel out here one time. That was the night I think the neighbors were about ready to ask us to go, until the 3 of them got involved playing ball with the kids across the street.

Roy, if you ever talked to him for any length of time, evidently plans little needling expeditions and there was never a time that he came out here that he didn't have some kind of a problem that he knew would get my blood pressure up and we'd argue about the rest of the evening. Well, this particular visit was during the time of the flying saucer craze and he claimed that he saw a flying saucer go over his area in Brooklyn and drop a pork chop bone on his head.

If he put half as much belief in himself that he has in Frank Frazetta, he'd be a world-beater too; just as Frank is. In his own way, Krenkel is doing great work, but he's lost in Frank Frazetta's work, which is fine, except that Roy has a right to be just as proud of his own work. He's his own worst enemy and his own worst knocker.

'LO, FELLAS.

“Joe was a deadline lover’s fool... he would make a deadline if they had to get him back from the grave.”

Joe Orlando

Al Feldstein: Joe was nicely talented. I found he was a little stiff with his interpretations of the stories. I think he did an adequate job on the stuff that we gave him. He’s developed a great deal.

Marie Severin: He looks like a very talented bug. He wouldn’t hurt a flea. He’s alright. He knows what he’s doing.

Jack Davis: I remember Joe Orlando being very quiet.

Wally Wood: Very helpful, eager, friendly, loyal and true. He would work through the day and night sometimes.

Harvey Kurtzman: Once for Christmas we all got cameras and film and we got together and showed our home movies. Joe Orlando took the funniest home movies in the world because of what he did, he took pictures in Florida and he was working with one roll of film so each scene that he shot was about 3 frames long and it was just blip, blip, blip, blip, blip, etc. He’d start to say, “Over there...” and the scene would change. It was a life-time of views on one roll of film.

George Evans: Joe was one of the guys that I hadn’t known before, but got to know quite well at E.C. He was a great guy. He pulled me out of a spot when E.C. and other accounts had folded and I hadn’t been able to pick up anything that quickly. Joe called up and asked if I wanted some work and boy did I want some work! So I worked for him penciling for awhile and he said that I should take the stuff that I’d done of his to these people and show it. He said to tell them that I’d worked on it and see if they could give me something of my own. That’s pretty damn generous.

On a personal level, it wasn’t clowning... we’d have serious discussions about things. One time we got into his childhood and evidently Joe could have gotten into the rackets. The way he put it, a lot of the kids he went to school with wound up making a fast buck at a very young age and it looked pretty good at the time and he had the same openings evidently. He could’ve moved in, but he liked to draw and there he was, working like hell, grinding away trying to acquire a style and ability and those guys were running around with lots of dough and him none. But when he thought it over he decided to stick with it and in the end when he looks back, a lot of those guys were in jail at a very young age too.

Roy Krenkel: Joe sort of learned his stuff to a large degree from Wally Wood. His style, and all that, was at one time very Woody-like because he was working with the guy for so long. Joe was another work horse. I don’t know whether he liked work, he just felt a great responsibility to produce work. He was a deadline lover’s fool. He would make a deadline if they had to get him back from the grave... a point of honor, a point of personal pride and a couple of other points I wouldn’t be able to distinguish on a rational level.

He was a reverse of myself. He was an affable guy, very easy to push around and at the same time stubborn. He wasn’t gullible, he knew he was being taken. I wouldn’t advocate anyone swinging on him in an alley... the guy would get beat to a pulp. Joe was a solid rock of muscle, but somehow he could get talked into things. There was this time when a bread company talked him into a job that I worked on with him. *Awful job!* These clowns wanted rows of bread lined up in a certain perspective in which about 65 bread ends had to be displayed. *AND THEN* the name Wonder Bread had to be lettered on each and every one of those blasted loaves at about a one inch scale! And Joe dutifully did this stuff! I think the whole job paid $250 or $300. He must have lost his shirt financially... I lost half my sanity.

Joe was very patient, immensely patient. An editor would say to Joe, “You have to do this panel over because we just have to have this guy coming in from the right.” and for some insane reason Joe would actually re-do the panel! And then the editor would look it over and say, “It’s alright, but we don’t like your lettering here, take the lettering out and do it over.” And this was in the days when pen and inks were maybe 18 or 20 dollars a page and Joe would dutifully re-do these things. Afterwards Joe would shrug philosophically and say, “Well... the editor wants it... we’ve got to give it to him. We’ve got to keep him happy.” Joe always worried about losing work which was silly because he was one of the pretty good guys at the time. That was his basic problem... he was a worrier.

NOW, THAT'S REAL NICE. YES, SUH!
CSA

66 Jack was very naive when he came to New York...he was once in a men's room and a guy came over to him and said he'd sell him a real diamond ring for $50...99

Jack Davis

Bill Gaines: Jack Davis was our fastest artist. This is not to suggest that maybe he wasn't our best artist too. I don't know... all our artists were our best artists, but Jack was very, very fast and that's the first thing that comes to mind when you say Jack Davis. He could turn out a 7-8 page story in 2-3 days if he really wanted to. As opposed to Johnny Craig who would probably take a month to do the same thing. Johnny was our slowest artist.

He's a very, very, sweet man, no one ever said anything bad about Jack. He doesn't have any enemies, and everybody who meets him just likes him, because he's just a good person.

Al Feldstein: An extremely talented, modest, southern gentleman. He was always able to take direction. He was a professional from the very outset, from the very beginning. He did whatever had to be done for the buck using the best of his ability. He was a pleasure to work for in that he took a script and added to it all of the wild techniques and interpretations that Jack was famous for. He really brought the thing to life in the Jack Davis style. Jack did the more wild, outlandish, moody kind of stuff.

Marie Severin: A big boy! He'll always be a big boy to me! He's the type of guy that you know at age 60 who'd still be able to go up to a gal and charm her into giving him a date. He's a charming fellow and the fastest pen in the west.

Wally Wood: It was hard to know Jack...he was so damn polite...like an oriental politeness almost. I mean if anybody would say anything good about his stuff he would shrug and say "Aw its nothing" and anything you did he'd just rave about.

Harvey Kurtzman: I probably know Jack as well as anybody does. To me he's a stylist- par-excellance! By a stylist I mean Jack has what I regard as a lovable technique. Looking at his stuff is like eating whipped cream, and strawberry shortcake because his stuff is very pleasant on the eye. His talents are as a craftsman, a stylist and a humorist all combined. He's one of those people who has a great facility with his tools and he creates swift and pleasant effects — as opposed to a guy like Graham Ingels, whose effects are effective but they're not pleasant necessarily; they're gruesome.

Personally, he was probably the most well adjusted guy in the whole crew of people that we had at E.C. He was a guy that never had tantrums, never got angry, was always courtly, polite and an asset to any group. He was an extremely pleasant personality and I think that would pretty much be everyone's opinion.

He has a marvelous sense of mimicry. Very often you'll get on the phone with him and you'll be talking to a truck driver and it'll be Jack. He has this southern accent which he can switch for a Brooklyn accent or for a western accent very easily. He could have been a movie actor because he has a high sense of acting.

Jack was very naive when he came to New York... he was a real hick from the sticks. He was once in a men's room and a guy came over to him and said he'd sell him a real diamond ring for $50. The guy dramatically took the ring and scratched it right across the length of the men's room mirror; cut a long line in the mirror to show that it was a real diamond. Jack grabbed for the bait instantly and bought himself the nicest glass ring in America with the last money he had. Jack was very naive and innocent. He's probably still naive, but I don't know how innocent.

Will Elder: Jack was a lot of fun. I really found Jack a strange animal to me. He was different from anyone I'd ever met. He's from the South and it was interesting to hear him talk. He was a real cool character with an amazing talent. Plus, this guy is such a dream guy. Here's this guy with all this talent, and he's a nice guy — he wouldn't hurt a fly...it was uncanny. He was such a nice guy, I felt it couldn't last...he's just trying to get along with everybody. He has to because he's up North, he's outnumbered, and he's being paid the Yankee dollar, what's he gonna do about it! But it wasn't that at all, he was just a very nice guy.

George Evans: Everytime I was around him he was the center of a bunch of laughing people. He just generated a likeability.

What a talent! Very lucrative. A lot of people can work that fast, but when you could work that well *AND* fast, that's the key.

HEY, LOOK! A NORMAL, HAPPY GUY- NOTHIN' LIKE THE REST OF US!
NAH! JUST GET HIM TALKIN' 'BOUT MECHANICS- HE FITS!

66 The world's second greatest waste of talent.99

George Evans

Bill Gaines: George was another sweet, lovable guy...quiet and gentlemanly. He could do the most ghastly stuff in the Crime and Shock books. This sweet little fella looked like an accountant and you would never dream that this man was capable of such brilliant depictions of brutality that we called upon him for.

Of course George's real love was W.W.I. airplanes and I'm sure he was really in his element when we put out *Aces High.*

Al Feldstein: I knew George fairly well as a professional. He was a Mid-Western kind of guy. George was a little bit like Jack Kamen. His work was realistic and controlled and we would therefore give him the slicker things to do. His work was like his character.

George was a professional. He was a W.W.I. airplane buff and we did *Aces High* because we knew that George was great at that stuff and would do well.

Marie Severin: Such a nice guy. I wish he was still in comics... he does great stuff. He was very quiet, but he had a great sense of humor...he could come out with some real sharp stuff. He was a man's man.

Harvey Kurtzman: George was a very formal, private guy. Very pleasant and very polite...came and went.

Will Elder: George was a sweet guy. There wasn't a sour bone in his whole body. That's the way he impressed me. He was a good fella, a very sweet guy. He wasn't funny. He wasn't much to laugh at, but he was a nice guy to know...pleasant to be around.

Roy Krenkel: The World's second greatest waste of talent... Frazetta being the world's first greatest waste of talent. He's a guy who can do almost anything. Straight illustration was his *real* field in my opinion.

He's an airplane authority...knows more about airplanes than God! Outside of his comic stuff he's being exploited for his fantastic knowledge of airplanes. One wonders why the guy has never really burst out. He's always busy as Hell...works like a dog.

He has a mad family...mad charming people...like television folks come to life! 500 neighbor kids come in and they all sit around and eat and have fun with the mother and father and everyone of them are happy. *Nobody leads that kind of life!* None of them look it, except that they are.

SOMEBODY MENTION COMMUNISM?

“A very traditional guy who always believed in Thanksgiving and Motherhood.”

John Severin

Bill Gaines: Johnny Severin was a very fine worker. He did the penciling and Elder did the inking for a variety of stories. We didn't use him that much. Harvey used him in his war books. Later, Johnny did *Two Fisted Tales* for awhile and was even editing and writing it, I believe. He did a little work at the beginning of MAD and then John and Harvey had a parting of ways. Since Harvey had been the one who principally used John, that was kind of the end of John with E.C. He's very conservative. You say communism to John Severin, he'd get red in the face and the veins would stand out, he'd have a heart attack, and get high pressure. He was the house conservative. Long before Buckley, there was John Severin.

Al Feldstein: John Severin was a competent artist who did very good science fiction for us. I felt that he had an antiquated style. I found his work was very inhibited. He was conservative in his material and his thinking also.

Marie Severin: He hasn't changed a bit. I'm sure everybody knows about his anticommunism. He's very honest and straightforward and he's very Irish. He's very big and he's my brother. He used to make whole battle-fields in the backyard or in the house and he showed me how to make things out of clay or wood soldiers. He never excluded me just because I was a girl. He was very good to me. He always made me feel that I was just as good as he was.

Jack Davis: I've always admired his drawings of soldiers in the Civil War. He really was a bug about that and that really impressed me.

Wally Wood: John Severin was a funny guy. I think he was some kind of a war hero. A true conservative... he always was.

John was the first artist that I met in this business, before I went to Hogarth School or anything. I hit every place in town and I got thrown out of every place in town. Then I went into one office, some religious comic or something and there was this guy sitting there and he started talking to me and we showed each other our stuff and he invited me over to his studio. In the studio were Harvey Kurtzman, Willy Elder, and Charlie Stern. I was really impressed with John and how nice he was to me. Harvey was kind of nasty — "Why are you letting a kid hang around here?" But they each did me an original and wished me luck and gave me a couple of lessons. It seemed that overnight I was working for E.C. and there was Harvey and he was my editor.

Harvey Kurtzman: He left school very early. I knew him for a brief period. John was the house conservative. He was always on the conservative side of any argument. A very traditional guy who always believed in Thanksgiving and Motherhood.

George Evans: When he found out I liked old W.W.I. planes, historical stuff and the like and I found out he had that much of an interest in it, I don't think we had any rational talk after that. As a guy, I liked him a lot. I knew him probably better than most, although I didn't meet him any more than anybody else, but we had this common interest. One of the funniest things about him that I recall... Bill always kept pretty good liquor on hand and nobody was adverse to having a little of it now and again. Bill had bought a glass with engraved lettering on it, and in the little engraved things in the glass were tiny holes. John poured some scotch in this glass and when he started drinking it the scotch trickeled down over his necktie and he gave a yell and grabbed up his necktie and he was licking all the scotch off his necktie and accusing them of all sorts of crimes for letting good scotch go to waste this way.

YA DIRTY SLOBS!
COME ON, HOMER, WE'RE LEAVIN'!
PHTOO!

"Marie was about the only one we'd allow to trample on our creative efforts."

Marie Severin

Bill Gaines: The daughter of the regiment! Marie, in addition to being a living doll, was the only girl in the office, outside of the secretaries. She was very Catholic and very moral...In a day when Catholicism and morality were quite different than today.

Whenever we, as males, would tend to go off the deep end, sex wise, it was Marie who would come in and stamp on our heads and refuse to allow it to be done. And we listened! We knew that somebody had to have some reign on us and Marie was about the only one we'd allow to trample on our creative efforts.

She was also probably the best damn colortist in the history of the comic industry. She's gone on to much better and greater things today, but I'll always think of Marie as *my* colorist.

Al Feldstein: Marie Severin was a doll. She was our conscience and our control in terms of morality, and going off the deep end. She was a great influence. It slightly threw her when we did something amoral or outside the ordinary accepted justice and retribution area. She was a great gal and I always enjoyed being with her. She was a top notch colorist. You have to give Marie Severin credit for selling a lot of the covers that were done in black and white, but were really brought to life by her color.

Jack Davis: She was always happy-go-lucky. A great pleasure and always fun to be around. She had a great personality and still does.

Wally Wood: She was great...still is too. I ran into her at Marvel, years later and I said, "Gee Marie, you haven't changed a bit." and she said, "Isn't it awful."

Will Elder: I happened to have liked Marie very much. Marie was the funniest girl. I think she was quite witty, very bright, funny, sharp, observant, but at times she could be very caustic. She had a great talent, but she never had a chance to display her talent to the degree she is doing now.

George Evans: Marie had a witty line for everything and everybody. You'd go in real serious and do a lot of talking and suddenly Marie would come out with a one-liner that... *POOF!* sent everything up. We had a lot of fun. She was a great kidder. She could pick up a fast line and come right back with something faster.

She was one hell of a good colorist! She made my stuff look *good.*

She was a great person to talk to and clown with. She would take all sorts of time out when she had a desk full of stuff a foot high and just waste time with you. You knew you should've gotten kicked out of her office and told to go, but there'd be a half dozen guys there just clowning around and wasting time.

DID YOU EVER HEAR THE ONE...

"I worked for Jack once...and I quit!"

Jack Kamen

Bill Gaines: We brought Jack in for the love books, and of course we didn't keep the love books very long so we tried to fit Jack into the other books we had. He fit very well into the Crime and Shock titles... these were really his forte.

Jack Kamen worked a little bit like Johnny Craig... the clean open look. To many people, he was not their favorite artist, but I think Jack was a good workman-like artist. He was a real pro. And more than anyone else we had, Jack was dependable. He never missed a deadline and when you're publishing that's very important. We had a lot of problems with say, Graham Ingels, who, brilliant as he was, would disappear for weeks while we're tearing our hair out waiting for him to come back with the story. But a guy like Jack, and we called on Jack for a lot of work, was almost as fast as Davis and he never missed a deadline and was there when we needed him. It's very important to have a guy like him around.

We used him in our humorous Science-Fiction stories where equipment wasn't called for because Jack was not strong on equipment. We also used him in the Grim Fairy Tales and again his pristeen qualities lent a delightful contrast to the dreadful things that were going to happen in those stories. I always felt that Jack was a very important cog in the E.C. machinery and I'm glad we had him.

Jack was one of the happiest guys around...almost the prototype of the legendary salesman who comes in with 6 dirty jokes every time you see him. Every time he walked into the office it was with a good feeling that we greeted him. I personally always liked Jack's work.

Al Feldstein: When we sat down to do a Jack Kamen script we did a story that was slick, modern, and up-to-date to fit his style, which was a slick, modern cold style. His style was slick and controlled and yet personally he was a very loose, free, wild guy.

Marie Severin: He was a nice guy. He was always trying to be the man about town.

Jack Davis: He was always very happy and had a joke or two to tell.

Wally Wood: I worked for Jack once. He was doing a comic book encyclopedia for some agency. I think everybody did panels for it. There would be a page on Ben Franklin which would be set up like a splash page with a couple of boxes. It sort of looked like Believe-It-Or-Not. There were thousands of these pages to do. And I quit.

Harvey Kurtzman: Jack was always very jolly. He'd come and go. He was always so happy and always making jokes.

Will Elder: Jack was a very outspoken guy. Extremely bright, intelligent, capable and quite knowledgeable. At times I thought he was in the wrong business. He'd make a great Public Relations man.

George Evans: Jack was very business like and when he came in he would have this stock of jokes to tell. He was a hellava good guy to work for. At one time Jack came to me with some work to do for an agency and apparently he was in some way directly associated with this agency. Well I started doing some work with a number of other artists for this agency only to find out that the company had no money. I was always a guy who went from check to check and I needed the money bad. Well, it seems that the other artists decided to get a lawyer to see what could be done about getting paid. The other artists called me up and asked if I would go in on this lawyer thing, but I didn't know that Jack was involved personally with the agency. I had agreed to go in on hiring a lawyer and I couldn't back out. It was only later that I found out that Jack himself could have lost considerable money to pay us off and I felt really bad about that. I guess in a way Jack has some contempt for me, but it was not intentional on my part. This is sort of an apology for the way things went. If it had been me personally, I would have never thought of going through it that way. I have had my loses and you learn to take them. I'm sorry this thing happened and I still retain a pretty lousy feeling.

Hi!
YOU
CHARACTERS!!
BUSTER
FAN
CLUB
SP

“I'm certain that when he finally took over the Alex Raymond strip it was like having arrived in heaven.”

Al Williamson

Bill Gaines: Al Williamson was a problem. He was so undisciplined and unstructured and was such a nut in those days. He got himself a good wife who's turned him into a good, sound, responsible adult. During E.C. though he was just a nut... part of the fleegal gang with Frazetta, Torres, and Krenkel. They'd just as soon play baseball as anything else. You never knew where to find him or what he was doing or whether he was working on your art or not...he was just a lovable nut.

Al Feldstein: Al came to us when he was still pretty young and was doing a lot of stuff that was outside the control of the editors in the comic field. I'm certain that when he finally took over the Alex Raymond strip he had reached his goal in life... I'm sure it was like having finally arrived in heaven. Since his earliest time he has worshiped the Raymond stuff..

I remember that he was always surrounded by other people... Krenkel... Frazetta... I think we called them the “Fleegals”. Al couldn't work unless he had people standing over him and giving him encouragement. Al always did such a spectacular job on his art, but it was with such tremendous pain...personal pain, tremendous anxiety, self examination, incrimination,...he went through the tortures of the damned developing his art.

Marie Severin: He was a young crazy fan and he still is a crazy fan today. He was such a lovable guy and he killed himself for his work. He was in the process of growing up at the time which was very pleasant to see...like a breath of fresh air. It may have been Moon air or Mars air, but he had a nice freshness about him.

Wally Wood: We've known each other since Hogarth school. He was very cocky, boisterous and a lot of fun. He used to walk into the Hogarth school where all of these older guys were learning to draw and he was a PRO! He'd walk in and say, “Hello students!”.

Al was a pretty wild guy. He was like a hippie of his time...always doing strange things, dressing in wild clothes. Al is the one guy who has changed the most. He's very grown up. He used to be different in every way. He used to be irresponsible and had such a terrible time getting work in on time. He would get hung up on each panel and he might finish an entire story except for the last panel and spend a week just on that single panel.

Harvey Kurtzman: The outstanding thing that I remember about Al Williamson was the year he and I rented a boat to go sailing. I'll never forget the image of Williamson standing in the bow of the boat holding the mast while his shirt and pants flapped away in the wind like an Alex Raymond drawing. I think Al knew it because he stood there all through the trip... I'm sure he saw himself as Flash Gordon getting ready to do battle with Ming.

Will Elder: He's my son. I always felt like a father to Al. He was the youngest of the group and what a terrific talent for his age. I really envied him because for a guy to have that much talent at that age was criminal, sinful! Al was like a blotter... he was absorbent of everybody and everything. Al would pick up things from everywhere...he would even copy if need be to master a style or technique. Al finally branched out into Al Williamson.

I admired him because of his enthusiasm and devotion. He has always collected things and has built up files and files of comics. He is one of the friendliest guys I know...like a puppy dog. He couldn't help but be liked.

Roy Krenkel: Al was a hard worker...obsessed with drawing and overly fussy. By fussy I mean these interesting blowups of his right in the middle of work progressing perfectly. Everything would be going great and suddenly Al would say, “I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!”...everything is then swept

off his desk, the floor is swept off and everything else, pencils get laid out in horizontal and vertical positions in 45 degree angles to one another...Then a big smile, "NOW I CAN WORK!" Then he goes back and does the same work because he can't do it any better than perfect anyhow! A typical Al Williamson syndrome.

Al would go on kicks. There was a time when Al swore he had given up collecting. He was absolutely serious about the whole thing and had it all rationalized. "Oh, I'm gonna have to stop collecting. I'm running out of room. It's just impossible, you can't get it all anyhow." Al had a big apartment at the time, but not big enough to suit him. He likes everything neat and orderly...he can't have it piled up. Well, this lasted for about 6 to 8 months, which must be an all time record for a collector and then finally somebody waved something under his nose he just couldn't resist, a free N.C. Wyeth or something, and he was back collecting wilder than ever!

George Evans: In my opinion, Al has the biggest talent of anybody, and always did. He and I were pretty close friends before he took me up to E.C. and at that time he was working almost strictly on raw talent. At that time he wouldn't do things that he didn't particularly like to do. Little by little, however, he pushed himself into it and began to do the things that he didn't like to do. Evidently, at that point everything jelled because he was able to do the things that he didn't like just as well as those he did.

On one occasion Al came over to my place when we were living in New Jersey to help me out with Captain Video. Neither of us really wanted to work on this thing so we used any excuse to get away. For some reason, we took off in my car, Al, myself, and my wife, and somewhere along the line we got a flat tire. At the time I was wearing a pair of army pants and when I got out and bent over to pry the tire loose the entire seat of my pants split. Al absolutely cracked up. I guess he stayed 2 or 3 days and I don't think he stopped laughing in all that time. Everytime he saw me he'd go into a peel of laughter and make a ripping sound and say, "When I saw that big ass come out...!" He never let me forget it.

Al sort of bounces around. When Al walks around it's like a space expedition. He clomps around and waves his arms and talks and everything's going on at the same time.

"He became aware that everyone else good was at EC and why was he not there."

Reed Crandall

Bill Gaines: One of the last to stumble in was Crandall and he always said he stumbled in because all of a sudden he became aware that everyone else good was there and why was he not there? He came walking in one day, and of course we all had heard of Reed Crandall and we were just as impressed with him as he was with us, so we fell on each other's necks and he became part of the group immediately.

He was a fine, fine craftsman and did some of our very best stuff. I only regret that he came to us so late. We didn't have him for the first half, so we only got half as much out of him as we would have if he had started in 1950.

Al Feldstein: I knew Reed Crandall and had known him from way back when he did the Doll Man. Reed Crandall was always one of my idols and when Reed Crandall walked into the office looking for work I fell on my knees because I always worshipped his style. So we gave him the work and we told him "Here, do it." Reed's style had already been tuned, his style, his interpretations had already been years and years in developing and so I couldn't do anything more with him. He was competent and what he did for us was terrific.

Marie Severin: Very quiet, no problems. He'd come in and get the work and go out.

George Evans: We worked together on quite a lot of stuff and that guy's style and approach to things is so powerful that even things that I penciled and sent out to him to ink...everybody thinks it's all Reed Crandall. Things of his that came back to me and I inked...everybody still says Crandall did it for you. I'm lost in the shuffle completely. He was always fun to work with and by working over his stuff I learned a lot about drawing.

He's got the sharpest wit. He sits there quietly while all kinds of conversations are going on and things are being built up and then quietly Reed comes in with the best punchline.

He's another guy like Krenkel. If he took the time and applied himself to painting sample things for pocket books or magazines you'd figure he couldn't help but hit.

BEST JOB I EVER DID.

“I felt that in the back of his mind he saw himself running for president someday.”

Wallace Wood

Bill Gaines: Wally Wood was used almost exclusively in the science fiction books and in Mad. We rarely gave him horror stories, although he did a few and did them very well, but I always think that Wally's forte was science fiction. He was the dean of science fiction and most of the E.C. science fiction books have Wally as their #1 man.

Wally was moody on occasion and he was difficult to get close to. It was hard to become a good friend of his, but when you got to know him you realized that underneath it all he was a sweet guy with a heart of gold and very lovable. It just took you awhile to get to know Wally.

Al Feldstein: Wally Wood was encouraged to loosen, to develop his own style. Wally was shy in a way. He was uncommunicative. I think that Wally was a very cautious individual. He liked the fact that people appreciated his art, but he was very careful about letting people come close to him as an individual. Wally has a lot of problems, but he's still a very talented guy.

Marie Severin: Everybody was crazy about his stuff. You couldn't say you didn't like his work, but you just had to accept it. There it was.

I used to think he was moody, maybe he was, but I found out over the years that he was just very shy.

Harvey Kurtzman: I think I can speak critically of Wally because I think he'd be the first one to admit that he has problems. He had this enormous talent and his curse was that he was introverted...everything was bottled up. The dominating thing in Wally's life was this bottled up quality which eventually did great harm to him and destroyed much of him.

Will Elder: There was a very quiet warmth about Wally that I liked. Wally was very unpretentious. He actually projected himself through his work. He worked extremely hard to be recognized for what he was. I felt that Wally could only exemplify himself through his art. There was a need of showing his sensitivity through his work since I don't think Wally had the personality to show it any other way. It was a complex and I think Wally was full of complexes, but due to those complexes Wally has turned out to be a master at what he does. He's a tremendous talent...a very gifted guy.

Roy Krenkel: Oh yeah, Wally! Wally and I worked together and it was a question of who exasperated the other the most. One anecdote immediately comes to mind...not an anecdote but a situation with Wally. You'd be going over to see Wally about noon or one o'clock, cause you got up late like all the guys. You'd been sleeping 7 or 8 hours...which wasn't enough. You'd come to Wally's door and you realize Wally had been up all night. You left him about 2 in the morning and you'd come back about 12. You ring the bell repeatedly...the door finally, slowly opens and Wally stands there with an absolutely glazed look in his eyes...totally incapable of focusing. A long pregnant silence lasting for about a minute and a half would go by and then without any change of expression would be “eh”...just a little coughing grunt “eh”. He'd be walking like a mummy and he'd slowly amble in and guzzle some fruit juice and go back to the drawing board. Typical Wood!

With all his brilliant imagination everything is done totally automatic...a real frozen zombie style of life. Why it didn't kill him I'll never know. The guy was totally obsessed with work. Really hung up on hard work and he'd never tire!... he'd go on and on and on and out would come brilliant stuff... AMAZING! It wasn't just the fact that Wally did a good job, which he did, or that there was a good story, which it was, but somehow it blended right. Wally had the right feel for that Ray Bradbury stuff.

George Evans: He struck me from the start as being the most serious man alive. I felt that in the back of his mind he saw himself running for President someday. Then to see him come out, later after E.C., with all this fairy-tale stuff came as a complete surprise to me. He always had a wye sense of humor and a dry sort of wit. I liked him, and I hope he liked me.

“Another thing about Frazetta . . .
HE HATES TREES!”

Frank Frazetta

Bill Gaines: Frazetta was another one of this group that were later called the “Fleegals”. I didn’t know Frank that well. Frank didn’t do too many stories for us. I have tremendous respect for him and I wish we could get the bastard to work for MAD, but Frank and I have a legal problem and it seems to be insurmountable. I don’t mean a legal problem, I mean a procedural problem. I buy all my artwork outright, Frank never sells his artwork outright. It sounds ridiculous, but there’s no way we seem to be able to resolve this. I have come up with all kinds of wild suggestions like paint 2 covers, I’ll buy one and you keep the other. I almost sold him on that one, but then he backed down. Or I’d say, give me a 50 year lease on the artwork and then you could have it back in 50 years, or you take a 50 year lease on the artwork and E.C. Publications will get it in 50 years. All these attempts to get around the problem have failed and it’s kind of a sad thing because he wants to work for MAD and MAD wants him. But we can’t resolve this problem, it’s been blocking us for years.

I love Frank’s work. What little he has done for E.C. and MAD has been great of course.

Harvey Kurtzman: He’s what I call a “Gut technician.” Frank goes into himself...into his deepest fantasies and puts his inner-most thoughts and dreams into his stuff and as a result his stuff is very effective. It touches your gut. Frank’s stuff is very sexual. I don’t think it’s deliberately sexual like Alex Ramond, whose Flash Gordon was totally sex oriented and yet was advertised as science fiction. Frank will have a science fiction or monster thing to do and yet it’ll all come out as sexy snakes and swords and muscles and even trees...he even does sexy trees! He gets a corresponding feeling in his readers and whatever it is they feel is very intense. Consequently he has probably the most loyal and passionate fandom of all the cartoonists.

George Evans: Williamson and Krenkel and Frank were very special friends of mine. I must admit that I share Roy’s kind of awe of Frank Frazetta. He can do this stuff and man, while everybody else seems to be laboring over it and racking themselves out to get something good down on paper, Frank will sit there and sketch something off while talking to you just to make a point and it comes out as Krenkel says, “A classic piece of line work.”

He worked with me on some stuff that I was doing on *Twilight Zone* for Gold Key. I was only too glad to have a guy of that caliber to help me out.

I’d go over there on a beautiful sunny day looking for any excuse not to be doing anything and Frank would be working away. I’d mention to him that my greatest vice was on a day like that, I’d rather get into the car and go down to the beach and he said no, he’d rather sit there and paint. That’s the way you gotta be.

Roy Krenkel: What can one say about Frazetta. It’s impossible to dislike the man, but he can irritate you to the point of fury! For example — he’ll love this — Frank has got to be Mr. Irresponsible! He’s totally irresponsible...not out of viciousness, not out of lack of memory, not out of absent-mindedness; he’s got a good mind, memory and everything else, it’s that he just doesn’t give a damn! In a real classical sense you could hardly imagine not giving a damn about anything like Frank doesn’t give a damn about responsibility! Frank was born with a natural talent to be irresponsible. But other than that, Frank’s a great guy. He’s a hard worker and he ain’t a hard worker... I don’t know! He works in bursts and spurts and with great intensity which seems to be totally focused on what he’s doing. I think that’s true because that’s the only way you can account for the kind of stuff that he can do. But the minute he’s done... FORGET IT! He could care less, all he wants to do is go out and play baseball, play with the kids, fuss around the house, walk through the woods...he’s sort of a Hal Foster all over again.

How he learns...nobody knows. How he gets that good, I don’t know. He doesn’t work at it, never sweats it, and never studies. If he does study he must do it in the bathroom because nobody’s ever caught him studying yet. It’s said of Frank with about 90% justification that anything you can do, Frank can do better. By and large that’s true. He admits that he’s no good in arithmetic or mathematics, which is normal. He’s been known to fix television sets by fooling around with them. He’ll take out the circuits in a T.V. set and the guy has *no knowledge of circuitry*! It came as news to Frank a while back that electricity ran through wires and that the 2 prongs produced the electrical reaction. He wasn’t even aware of negative and positive forces and all that! And it was with this kind of scientific and electronic background that he could fix T.V. sets! This is one example...anything you can do, Frank can do better.

And bowling for example. You watch bowlers on T.V. in these national meets and some are fairly graceful and some are not, but all are dead accurate and dead-eye bowlers. Well, Frank used to drag me along to his bowling meets and the alleys were full of guys who could bowl...280 or 300 was not unheard of among these men. These guys were all physical and graceful men. Then Frank would get up, and bowl, and the rest of them look like maladroits! He doesn’t bowl any better, but the way he does it, the way he holds the ball, the way he steps forward; every motion — FLUID BEAUTY! Not only do you watch the ball go down the alley, but you watch Frazetta wind-up...Beautiful, graceful, never fumbles, never stumbles, never hesitates...every movement is just right! Is this natural or does he work at it? He’s quiet about it — lets us think that it’s natural.

Another thing about Frazetta — HE HATES TREES!!!

EC On Film

by Bhob Stewart

In Fritz Lang's 1956 RKO production, WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS, a reporter (Dana Andrews) makes an appeal on television directly to an unknown psychopath (John Barrymore Jr.). The scene cuts from the studio to Barrymore, alone in a room reading *Tales from the Crypt* #32. Barrymore looks up at the tv screen. The comic falls to the floor. Miraculously, in this shot, it is no longer *Tales from the Crypt* but a propman's mockup of a comic which never existed. Technically, one might record this bit of film history trivia as the first appearance of EC on film.

Freddie Francis' TALES FROM THE CRYPT film has elicited favorable responses from a number of critics who usually turn away from horror film fare, and, for that reason, perhaps some of the many EC stories which can be seen on film should receive documentation.

The 1969 NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, which has grossed $3 million since its release and adds more coin every week, owes a great deal to EC. Director George Romero, mistaking DC for EC, has acknowledged that debt by stating, "I had in the back of my mind the whole time the old DC comic books — you know, *Tales from the Crypt* and stuff like that. I used to be a big comic fan, although I don't think I am now except maybe in a nostalgic way. Most of the lines were written, some the night before. We'd sit around knowing the direction the thing had to go and write dialogue."

Louis Malle's wacky ZAZIE is based on a novel by Raymond Queneau but the visual inspiration harkens back to Harvey Kurtzman and Bill Elder. There is also a Kurtzman-like theme of a corrupt world perceived satirically through the eyes of a young innocent. Once described as a "live-action animated cartoon," ZAZIE features certain compositions within the camera frame which actually *look* like Kurtzman layouts — particularly a moment when a purse-snatcher is seen far off in the background while a monotone conversation takes place in the foreground. When a character in the story reads *Mad* comics, one's suspicion that the film is a *hommage* to Kurtzman seems confirmed.

Jack Smight's made-for-tv movie, THE SCREAMING WOMAN, first telecast January 29, 1972, is based on Ray Bradbury's short story (originally published in the May 27, 1951 issue of *Today*) which Jack Kamen illustrated for *Crime SuspenStories* #15. The story went through considerable changes: the character of the little girl was rewritten to provide a star vehicle for Olivia de Havilland, and the film suffers from an excess of padding.

"The Black Ferris" which Jack Davis illustrated for *Haunt of Fear* #18 was originally published in the May, 1948 *Weird Tales*. In 1955, Samuel Goldwyn Jr. filmed this story as a pilot for a proposed tv series of Bradbury stories. To facilitate filming, the ferris wheel was changed to a merry-go-round. An excellent performance by Peter Votrian as one of the two boys and a sensitive treatment of the material resulted in an evocative half-hour, perhaps the only film to truly capture the elusive essence of Bradbury's poetic prose.

Many film productions of Bradbury material have been planned and scheduled only to wind up on a shelf instead of in the can. One such was a motion picture which would have combined his two stories, "The Rocket Man" and "Kaliedoscope" — an idea which originated with EC. It appeared, illustrated by Wallace Wood, in *Weird Fantasy* #13 (May/June, 1952) under the title "Home to Stay." (Independent of EC, Wood has been involved in several film projects: storyboarding the live-action feature film WEDDINGS AND BABIES; creating an animated commercial for Alka-Seltzer in 1968; conceiving a satirical animated sci-

The Most Dangerous Game

THE THING

ence-fiction series, "I.Q. and the Rejects," which was under consideration by Paramount at the time their animation department folded.)

Weird Science-Fantasy #27, #28 and #29 featured Joe Orlando's illustrations of Otto Binder's "Adam Link" stories (originally published in *Amazing Stories* during 1939 and 1940). With a little bit of luck and careful perusal of tv listings, you can catch a rerun of *Outer Limits*' "Adam Link" adaptation, featuring Leonard Nimoy in the role of the reporter.

Watch, too, for reruns of the half-hour *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* where you'll find a number of themes and ideas employed by EC before this show went on television. "Revenge," based on a short story by Samuel Blas and directed by Hitchcock in 1955 with Ralph Meeker, Vera Miles, Francis Bavier and Ray Teal, featured a brief aside by Hitchcock defying the viewer to guess the ending. No problem for the EC buffs who were watching; they had previously read "Murder May Boomerang," which had different character types running through a quite similar plot in *Crime SuspenStories* #1 (later reprinted in #19), illustrated by Johnny Craig.

"In Each and Every Package," illustrated by Reed Crandall in *Crime SuspenStories* #22, tells of a man who wins $3000 on a radio quiz show — the prize money being buried by the quiz show in the exact location where his murdered wife is hidden. This story has several parallels with and apparently derives from John Collier's memorable "Back for Christmas" (a man buries his wife in the basement and leaves the country only to learn that she had made prior arrangements to have the basement excavated for a wine cellar, a surprise gift). John Williams, Isabel Elsom and A. E. Gould-Porter appear in the cast of the 1956 tv adaptation, crisply directed by Hitchcock.

Christian Nyby's THE THING (1951) is credited as an adaptation of John W. Campbell's "Who Goes There?" (originally authored under the pseudonym Don A. Stuart). The screenplay, however, retains little of the original story, but the basic idea — a malevolent life energy force possessing humans — abandoned in the film can be found in "My Home," illustrated by Orlando in *Weird Fantasy* #21.

"Island of Death," by Kurtzman in *Vault of Horror* #13 is quite obviously a switch on Richard Connell's famous short story, "The Most Dangerous Game," filmed in 1932 with Joel McCrea and Fay Wray (and also an unforgettable radio program, broadcast October 1, 1947 on CBS Radio's *Escape*). Kurtzman's "Henry and His Goon-Child" (*Weird Fantasy* #14 — Sept/Oct 1950) is faintly reminiscent of Henry Kuttner's classic "The Twonky," filmed by Arch Oboler in 1953 with Hans Conried, Joan Blondell and Billy Lynn. (This movie, unfortunately, is seldom telecast.)

Quite a few EC stories used a second-person narrative style, sometimes combined with a subjective camera technique — in which the viewer sees through a character's eyes — as in the films THE LADY IN THE LAKE (1947) and EXECUTIVE SUITE (1954). One such story was "You, Murderer," illustrated by Bernard Krigstein in *Shock SuspenStories* #14. The hypnotist in the story resembles Conrad Veidt as the somnambulist in THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (1919), and the drawings of city streets borrow from the style of German expressionism which was employed in the creation of CALIGARI's angular askew sets. Krigstein signed the story, "Dr. Caligari Krigstein" and later commented, "I felt that there is a similarity of genre... both very weird and rather expressionistic."

"The Island Monster," illustrated by Al Williamson in *Weird Science* #17, follows all the major plot twists of KING KONG (1933) but substitutes a hapless space creature for Kong. When the creature is captured, one character comments, "I... I saw a movie once. This... this reminds me of it! King Kong... or something." Williamson enjoyed drawing his favorite actors into stories: notice Stewart Granger in "Food for Thought" by Williamson and Roy Krenkel in *Incredible Science Fiction* #32 (reprinted in Russ Cochran's *EC Portfolio* #1). And while we're on that vein, let's not forget Ed Wheelan who drew four issues of *Fat and Slat* for EC in 1947 and 1948 but is better known for creating the classic syndicated strip "Minute Movies," which featured a regular cast of "actors" enacting different dramas.

Before we drift further and further away on this sea of esoterica, let's take note of THE FISHERMAN (1966), the first film adapted directly from an EC story. Based on "Gone... Fishing," illustrated by Davis in *Vault of Horror* #22, this live-action short subject was shot in 16 mm., blown up to 35 mm., opened at an Eastside arthouse and received a few scattered press mentions. (Davis drawings have also been adapted to film; NBC gave his football cartoons a brief and extremely limited animation treatment for a 1971 tv spot.)

The 1972 Amicus production, TALES FROM THE CRYPT, it should be mentioned, has stories taken *not* from the five years of comics but from the two 1966 Ballantine paperback reprints, "Tales from

the Crypt" and "The Vault of Horror." Script conferences between Russ Jones of Shepperton Studios and Milton Subotsky led eventually to Subotsky's adaptations of "...And All Through the House..." (Craig in *Vault* #35), "Reflection of Death" (Feldstein in Crypt #23; later redrawn by George Evans into the Picto-Fiction format for *Terror Illustrated* #2), "Blind Alleys" (Evans in *Crypt* #46), "Poetic Justice" (Graham Ingels in *Haunt* #12) and "Wish You Were Here" (Ingels in *Haunt* #22). "Wish You Were Here" has a brief bit of dialogue about William Wymark Jacobs and his story "The Monkey's Paw" — another instance, like "The Island Monster," of EC acknowledging the original source. Yet another variation, "The Gorilla's Paw," illustrated by Craig appeared in *Terror Illustrated* #1. ("The Monkey's Paw" has been adapted to film more than once: Manning Haynes directed the 1923 silent version; Wesley Ruggles directed RKO's 1932 David O. Selznick production which featured a Max Steiner score.) Vincent Canby's *New York Times* review of TALES FROM THE CRYPT cited "Blind Alleys" as "a very dim spin-off of FREAKS," (1932) but Canby's phrase would have more validity if applied to "Horror in the Freak Tent," illustrated by Wood for *Haunt of Fear* #5 (and later redrawn by Crandall for *Terror Illustrated* #2).

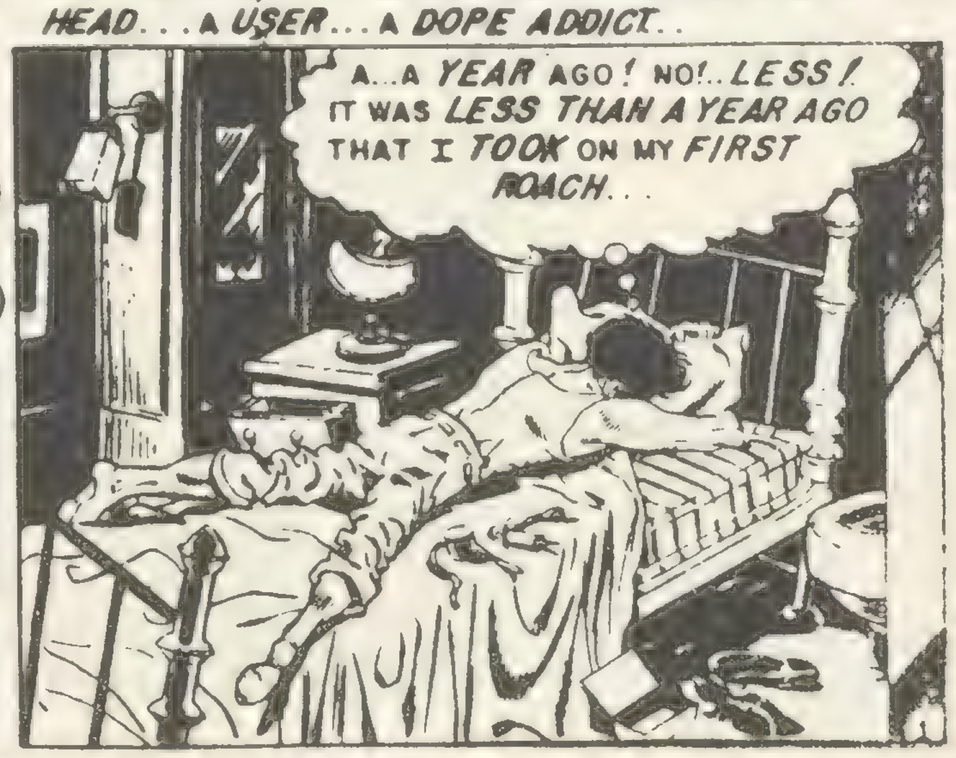
While bemoaning the fact that more viable EC stories like "Deadly Beloved" and "You, Murderer" or stories rich in characterization like "Prairie Schooner" were not even considered, one should, at the same time, simply be grateful for Peter Cushing's best performance in years and the remarkably faithful adaptations. It is EC-styled irony that aurhors like Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Faulkner have been rewritten for the screen in a fashion that leaves a skeleton of the original work while a handful of comic book stories are lensed with only a few minor changes and a small amount of updating.

THE MONKEY

I SPRAWL FACE DOWNWARD ON THE SWEAT-SOAKED IRON BED OF A DISMAL CHEAP HOTEL ROOM, WITH MY GUTS LONG EMPTIED AND THE SINK STAINED BILIOUS FROM MY HEAVINGS, AND I TREMBLE AND SHIVER, STARTING AT EVERY SOUND THAT ECHOES OUTSIDE MY DOOR. MY FIT LIES OPEN BESIDE ME, THE INSTRUMENTS OF MY RELIEF SPILLED OUT UPON THE DIRTY BED SHEETS... THE SPIKE, THE HOSE, THE BLACKENED SPOON, THE CAN OF STERNO AND I WAIT. I WAIT WITH MY FIT FOR THE WELCOME FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS... FOR THE STACCATO KNOCKING UPON THE DOOR... FOR THE FAMILIAR FIGURE TO SAUNTER THROUGH IT WITH HIS HAND EXTENDED, TAKING MY MONEY AND SLIPPING ME MY PRECIOUS JOLT OF 'H'. I'VE WAITED. BUT MY PUSHER HAS NOT COME...

I'VE WAITED THROUGH THE HOURS WHILE THE PERSPIRATION POURED FROM MY PORES AND MY STOMACH TIED ITSELF INTO KNOTS AND MY MUSCLES FELT LIKE RED-HOT RODS AND THE MONKEY ON MY BACK BEGAN TO SCRATCH AND TEAR AND SCREAM UNTIL I HAD TO HOLD MY TREMBLING HANDS TIGHT OVER MY MOUTH TO SHUT THAT MADDENING MONKEY UP..

AND AS I LIE HERE WITH MY BODY RACKED IN PAIN AND MY THROAT DRY AND BURNING AND MY TONGUE FUZZY IN MY MOUTH, I THINK OF HOW I FIRST BECAME A HEAD... A USER... A DOPE ADDICT..



'ROACH' IS 'JIVE-T'... 'JOINT'... A REEFER... A MARIJUANA CIGARETTE. MOST 'HEADS' START WITH 'T' AND GRADUATE TO 'H' OR 'M'... HEROIN OR MORPHINE. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME. I WAS GOING TO CENTRAL HIGH BACK THEN...

HEY, EDDIE! C'MON ALONG. ME AND SOME OF THE CLAN ARE GOING TO BLAST A FEW OF THESE.

WHAT ARE THEY, SID?

POT GRASS BUTTS, YOU SQUARE. DON'T YOU POP THIS STUFF YET?

MARI-JUANA!?

COOL IT, YOU JERK. YOU WANT TO GET ME TWISTED? SOME NARC MAY BE PINNING US. C'MON. HOP IN.

NO, THANKS, SID. I'D RATHER NOT...

AW, C'MON, EDDIE. WE'RE GONNA HAVE A WHIG... A BALL. SUE'LL BE THERE. I KNOW YOU LIKE SUE.

SUE!? SUE MINNER? SHE... SHE SMOKES 'T'?

I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. SUE MINNER SMOKING MARI-JUANA. I WAS CRAZY ABOUT SUE. I THOUGHT SHE WAS THE PRETTIEST GIRL IN CENTRAL HIGH...

SUE'S OKAY, EDDIE! SHE'S REAL STRAIGHT! SHE'S ON IT! SORRY YOU WON'T JOIN UP. WELL...

HOLD ON, SID.

I FIGURED IT WOULD BE A GOOD WAY TO GET FRIENDLY WITH SUE, SO I WENT ALONG WITH SID. HE TOOK ME TO A DINGY CELLAR CLUB HOUSE NEAR THE SCHOOL...

WELCOME TO THE T-PANTRY, EDDIE.

WHERE'S SUE, SID?

SHE'LL BE HERE SOON, EDDIE. HERE! LIGHT UP ON THIS WHILE YOU'RE WAITING.

TH-THANKS, SID.

THAT *'ROACH'* I *BLASTED* WHILE WAITING FOR SUE MINNER WAS MY *FIRST* MARIJUANA CIGARETTE. SID SCANLON, WHO'D GIVEN IT TO ME, WATCHED TILL I'D FINISHED IT. SUE NEVER CAME, BUT BY THAT TIME I DIDN'T CARE. I WAS *'HI'*...

GIMME *ANOTHER* ONE, SID. I'M *FLYIN'*.

THESE THINGS COST *DOUGH*, EDDIE. LET YOU HAVE ONE FOR *TWO BITS*.

I NEVER *REALIZED* TILL IT WAS *MUCH TOO LATE* THAT SID HAD *LIED* TO ME ABOUT SUE.. THAT SHE WAS *NEVER* COMING... AND THAT HE'D ONLY *GIVEN* ME THE *'JOINT'* TO GET ME *STARTED*. SID SCANLON WAS A *'PUSHER'*...

TWO BITS...FOR *ONE LOUSY BUTT?*

TAKE IT OR *LEAVE IT*, EDDIE.

I TOOK IT. I WAS *'HOOKED'*. I REACHED INTO MY POCKET AND FORKED OVER WHAT WAS TO BE MY *FIRST* IN A LONG SERIES OF *PAYMENTS* FOR *'THE STUFF'*...

I'LL... *TAKE* IT, SID. HERE Y'ARE.

THANKS, EDDIE. I'LL BE *SEEING* YOU. *S'LONG*.

SID NEVER HAD TO LOOK FOR ME AFTER THAT. *I* LOOKED FOR *HIM*. AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I WAS BEGGING HIM FOR...

..SOMETHIN' *STRONGER*, SID. I DON'T GET MUCH OF A *RISE* OUT OF *'T'* ANYMORE.

I CAN GET YOU SOME *'PILLS'*, KID.

PILLS, SID?

'JACKETS'...*'DEVILS'*. *'B-PILLS'*. *BENZEDRINE*...

I WAS PROMOTED. NOW I WAS A *'BENNY-HEAD'*... A *BARBITUATE-HEAD*... A *BENZEDRINE ADDICT*...

RED OR *YELLOW*, KID?

IT DOESN'T *MATTER*, SID... *EITHER ONE*. I *NEED IT BAD*. GIMME..

AND THEN, IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT I GRADUATED TO..

'H', SID. *I NEED 'H'*.

OKAY, EDDIE. BUT, IT'LL *COST* YOU! *TWO BUCKS* A *JOLT* AND A *FIN* FOR THE *FIT*.

IT HAD TAKEN ME LESS THAN *THREE MONTHS* TO MOVE FROM BLASTING 'JIVE-T' TO POPPING 'H'. SID PROVIDED ME WITH *'THE FIT'*... A *'SPIKE'* OR *'HYPO,'* A LENGTH OF *RUBBER HOSE* TO DISTEND THE VEIN, A *SPOON* TO HEAT THE 'H' IN, AND A CAN OF STERNO. I WAS *ON IT*...

I NEED A *FIX*, SID. HERE'S THE TWO BUCKS.

SORRY, EDDIE. MY *OLD* SUPPLIER GOT *NABBED* BY THE *HEATS*. A JOLT WILL COST YOU *TEN*, NOW.

THE ALLOWANCE MY MOM AND DAD GAVE ME WASN'T ENOUGH TO KEEP MY NEEDS SATISFIED NOW. I NEEDED *MORE DOUGH*. I GOT A JOB AFTER SCHOOL...

S'MATTER, EDDIE? YOU LOOK *SICK!*

IT'S *NOTHIN*,' MR CLEMENTS. *I'M* ALL RIGHT. ER... CAN YOU GIVE ME AN *ADVANCE* ON MY *PAY*, TODAY, MR. CLEMENTS?

TODAY'S ONLY *WEDNESDAY*, EDDIE! *ALREADY*, I'VE GIVEN YOU *HALF* YOUR PAY!

I *NEED* IT, MR CLEMENTS! *PLEASE!*

YOU LOOK *FUNNY*, EDDIE. YOUR *EYES*...

GET OFF MY BACK, MR. CLEMENTS! ARE YOU GOING TO *GIVE* ME THE DOUGH OR *AIN'T* YOU?

YOU *FINISH* THE *WEEK*... YOU *GET PAID*. *NO MORE ADVANCES*.

WHY, YOU *DIRTY LITTLE @#!!XX?!*

I COULDN'T *HOLD* A JOB AFTER THAT. MOM AND DAD NEVER KNEW IT, BUT I STOPPED *GOING* TO SCHOOL. I USED TO GO DOWNTOWN, TO THE DEPARTMENT STORES... AND *SHOPLIFT*...

DEPT A

CHARGE PLAN

...AND THEN I'D *PAWN* THE STUFF I'D SWIPED.

WHERE'D YOU *GET* IT?

DON'T ASK QUESTIONS. JUST GIMME WHAT IT'S *WORTH* TO YOU, AND *MAKE IT SNAPPY*.

I'D TAKE THE DOUGH I'D GOTTEN FROM THE STUFF I'D SWIPED, AND I'D TRACK DOWN SID...

I *TRIED* A 'COLD TURKEY'... A *WITHDRAWAL*... *ONCE* AND *ONLY ONCE*. I WAS SHORT OF CASH. ALL NIGHT LONG I PACED THE FLOOR OF MY PAD AS THE *TREMBLES* BEGAN AND THE *NAUSEA* SWEPT OVER ME AND I COMMUTED TO THE BATHROOM AND *VOMITED* MY *GUTS* OUT AND THE *DIARRHEA* POURED FROM ME AND MY *NERVE-ENDS* BURNED AND THE *MONKEY* ON MY BACK BEGAN TO *SCRATCH* AND *CLAW* AND *TEAR* UNTIL...

THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN I FINALLY SCORED WITH SID, I BEGGED HIM...

I'LL *NEVER* GO THROUGH *THAT* AGAIN. *NEVER*. I *MADE UP MY MIND THAT NIGHT* THAT I'D *ALWAYS* HAVE ENOUGH DOUGH FOR MY FIXES. I KNEW I COULD *NEVER* GO THROUGH A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL. I *SWIPED* THE MONEY FOR A JOLT FROM MY OLD MAN'S WALLET WHILE HE SLEPT...

I RUSHED HOME, HOLDING, AND TORE UPSTAIRS TO MY PAD. MOM TRIED TO CORNER ME ON THE WAY, BUT I BRUSHED HER ASIDE...

I SLAMMED INTO MY ROOM AND LOCKED THE DOOR AND PULLED OPEN MY DRAWER WHERE I KEPT MY FIT...

CRIPES, WHERE *IS* IT? I *HAD* IT HERE! I...

I LOOKED AROUND. DAD SAT ON THE BED BEHIND ME, STARING AT ME, HIS EYES BURNING...HIS MOUTH SET IN A TIGHT GRIM LINE...

THIS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, EDDIE?

POP!

HE HELD THE FIT IN HIS HAND. HIS EYES FILLED WITH TEARS...

MY SON... TAKING *DOPE!*

GIVE IT TO ME, POP! *GIVE ME THAT FIT.*

HE STARTED TO LECTURE ME. HIS MOUTH KEPT OPENING AND CLOSING AND WORDS POURED OUT, BUT I DIDN'T HEAR THEM. I KEPT LOOKING AT THE FIT WHILE MY THROAT GREW DRIER AND DRIER AND MY STOMACH STARTED TO GROWL AND HEAVE AND THE *MONKEY* CLIMBED *UP THERE* AGAIN...

WHAT DID WE EVER *DO?* WE *SAVE* YOU EVERYTHING. WE *TRIED!* WE *SACRIFICED!* *WHY*, EDDIE? *WHY?*

CAN IT, POP! GIMME THE *FIT* FOR *GOD'S SAKE!*

...AND THE PAIN BEGAN. THE MONKEY STARTED SCRATCHING AND CLAWING AND I STARTED GETTING SICK AND DIZZY AND THE TREMBLES CAME OVER ME...

NO, EDDIE. YOU'RE *THROUGH* WITH THE STUFF. I'M GOING TO TURN YOU OVER TO THE *POLICE*. FOR A *CURE*.

NO! *NO, POP!* YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!

POP STARTED TO TO GET UP. I FELT ALL WILD AND CRAZY AND DESPERATE INSIDE, AND THAT MADDENING MONKEY KEPT SCREAMING AND CLAWING...

IT'S FOR YOUR *OWN GOOD*, EDDIE. *THEY'LL* GET YOU OFF IT. THEY'LL...

GIMME THAT FIT, POP!

SUDDENLY I SAW MYSELF GOING THROUGH A *WITHDRAWAL* AGAIN AND EVERYTHING WENT WHITE-HOT BEFORE MY EYES. I SNATCHED UP AN END-TABLE LAMP AND BROUGHT IT DOWN ON POP'S HEAD...

POP WENT SPRAWLING AND I GRABBED THE FIT AND DASHED OUT OF THE BEDROOM. MOM SCREAMED AFTER ME..

THAT WAS YESTERDAY. NOW, I LIE SPRAWLED ON THE SWEAT-SOAKED BED OF A DISMAL CHEAP HOTEL ROOM WITH MY GUTS LONG EMPTIED, TREMBLING AND SHIVERING, WAITING FOR SID...

THE SINK IN MY ROOM IS STAINED BILIOUS WITH MY HEAVINGS AND MY FIT LIES OPEN BESIDE ME AND I START AT EVERY SOUND OUTSIDE MY DOOR. AND THEN IT COMES. THE HEAVY KNOCK...

I LEAP FROM MY BED, DRIPPING WITH PERSPIRATION, AND SWING WIDE THE DOOR. THE *FUZZ* STANDS THERE IN HIS BLUE COAT WITH THE BRASS BUTTONS AND THE GLEAMING TIN SHIELD...

THE *NARC* PUSHES PAST ME, GRIMACES DOWN AT THE SPILLED FIT LYING ON THE IRON BED AND UNHOOKS HIS CUFFS...

I GOT THE RIGHT GUY, EDDIE. SID SCANLON WAS PICKED UP AFTER YOUR MOM PHONED US. HE TOLD US WHERE TO FIND YOU.
YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' ON ME. THAT AIN'T MY FIT. I WAS HOLDIN' IT FOR SID. I DON'T TOUCH THE STUFF! I...

YOU MUST'VE NEEDED A FIX PRETTY BAD, EDDIE. YOU HIT HIM SO HARD, YOU SPLIT HIS HEAD OPEN WITH THAT LAMP. HE DIED INSTANTLY. LET'S GO...
NO... SOB... NO! OH, GOD! GET THIS MONKEY OFF MY BACK! OH, GOD!

THE END

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! AND NOW, IT'S *DELIRIUM DESSERT* TIME IN C.K.'S MORBID MUCK-MAG... AND YOUR *SHUDDER - JERK*, YOUR *FESTERING FRAPPE-FEEDER*, YOUR *SORDID SUNDAE-SLOPPER, THE OLD WITCH*, IS READY TO DISH OUT HER LATEST COOL CAULDRON CONCOCTION... A DELIGHTFULLY ENJOYABLE TALE OF *EVIL EMBROIDERY* AND *CREEPY CROCHETING* AND *NAUSEATING KNITTING* WHICH I CALL.

ACCIDENTS and OLD LACE

THE STILL NIGHT OUTSIDE THE BOARDING HOUSE WAS SUDDENLY SHATTERED BY THE SICKENING IMPACT OF TWO TONS OF METAL AND RUBBER AND GLASS AND FLESH MEETING A SOLID WALL OF BRICK AND CONCRETE. THE PAINFUL SQUEALING OF BRAKES PRECEDING THE CRASH STILL ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT AS THE ROOMERS POURED OUT ONTO THE PORCH AND DOWN THE WOODEN STEPS. ERIC HOLBIEN JOINED THEM AS THEY RUSHED TO THE MASS OF TWISTED FENDERS AND PULVERIZED WINDOWS, TORN MUSCLES AND SHATTERED BONE, AND THICK BLOOD THAT OOZED FROM THE WRECK AND POOLED LIKE A SCARLET LAKE UPON THE COLD SIDEWALK...

ERIC HOLBIEN STOOD BEHIND THE THREE OLD LADIES THAT SHARED THE HUGE ROOM NEXT DOOR TO HIS. HE WATCHED WITH SATISFACTION AS THEIR MOUTHS DROPPED OPEN DUMBLY AND THEIR EYES GLAZED IN HORROR AND THE COLOR DRAINED FROM THEIR AGED AND WRINKLED FACES AS THEY BEHELD THE DEATH SCENE, AND ERIC HOLBIEN SMILED ...

HE WATCHED THEM TURN IN DREAD AND REVULSION AND SCURRY LIKE DRY LEAVES OVER THE BOARDING HOUSE LAWN TO THE SAFETY AND SANCTITY OF THE IMPOSING STRUCTURE THAT HAD BEEN THEIR HOME FOR THE PAST TWELVE YEARS...

AND HE KNEW THAT SOON HE WOULD HAVE ANOTHER FABULOUS TAPESTRY TO SELL TO HIS FRIEND, MILTON... A TAPESTRY WOVEN FEVERISHLY BY THREE PAIRS OF GNARLED AND NERVOUS HANDS GUIDED BY THREE PAIRS OF MILKY BLOODSHOT EYES THAT HAD LOOKED UPON THE HORROR OF VIOLENT ACCIDENTAL DEATH...

AS THE HASTILY SUMMONED AMBULANCE SCREAMED UP TO THE CRASH SCENE IN ITS USELESS MERCY TRIP, ERIC HOLBIEN EASED HIMSELF INTO A RICKETY PORCH ROCKER AND THOUGHT BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF ALL THIS... TO THAT VERY FIRST DAY HE'D COME TO THE BOARDING HOUSE...

OF *COURSE*, MR. HOLBIEN! I HAVE A VERY *NICE* ROOM VACANT. FIFTEEN A WEEK...*WITH MEALS*...

I'LL *TAKE* IT, MRS. CARTER.

ERIC HAD BEEN AN *ART DEALER* BACK IN NEW YORK. HE'D HAD A SMALL GALLERY BUT IT HAD NEVER BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL. THE ARTISTS THAT HAD COME TO HIM WITH THEIR CANVASES AND SCULPTURINGS HAD NOT BEEN TOO GOOD. HE'D BEEN FORCED TO CLOSE THE GALLERY AFTER A WHILE. PEOPLE HAD STOPPED COMING TO BUY...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE A *NEW ADDITION* TO OUR LITTLE FAMILY! THIS IS MR. ERIC HOLBIEN...

YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR *DINNER*, MR. HOLBIEN!

SO ERIC HAD COME TO MILLVILLE TO BEGIN AGAIN. HE'D HAD NOTHING SPECIFIC IN MIND. HE'D JUST PACKED HIS THINGS IN NEW YORK AND TAKEN A TRAIN WEST. AND WHEN HE'D BECOME TIRED OF RIDING, HE'D GOTTEN OFF... AND IT'D BEEN AT MILLVILLE...

OH, *I'M* SORRY! THIS IS *GRACE*... AND *CHARLOTTE*... AND *EMMA LOU SALSBURY*, THEY LIVE IN THE ROOM *NEXT DOOR* TO YOURS...

HOW DO YOU DO, LADIES?

ERIC HAD NODDED ABSENTLY TO THE THREE OLD LADIES AND PICKED AT HIS FOOD, HIS THOUGHTS A MILLION MILES AWAY. WHAT COULD HE *DO* NOW THAT HE'D COME TO MILLVILLE? HOW LONG COULD HE *LAST* UNTIL HIS MONEY RAN OUT?...

WHAT DO YOU *DO*, MR. HOLBIEN? I MEAN, WHAT *BUSINESS* ARE YOU IN?

WHY...I...I USED TO BE AN *ART DEALER*, MRS. CARTER!

GRACE! CHARLOTTE! EMMA LOU! DID YOU *HEAR*? MR. HOLBIEN IS AN *ART DEALER*. YOU *MUST* SHOW HIM YOUR *TAPESTRIES!*

TAPESTRIES!? WHY, I...

OH, MR. HOLBIEN WOULDN'T BE INTERESTED, JANET!

THE GIRLS ARE *SHY*, MR. HOLBIEN. THEY WEAVE *WONDERFUL* TAPESTRIES. AFTER DINNER, YOU MUST *SEE* THEM...

I'D ...I'D BE *DELIGHTED*...

HE'D AGREED TO LOOK AT THE SALSBURY SISTERS' WORK MERELY AS A CONCESSION... TO AVOID INSULTING THEM. AND THE ONE THEY'D *SHOWN* HIM HAD BEEN JUST WHAT HE'D *EXPECTED*...

IT'S VERY *PRETTY!* FINE *CRAFTSMANSHIP!* GOOD *COLOR!* ER...AH..

IS IT *WORTH* ANYTHING, MR. HOLBIEN?

BUT THEN, HE'D SPIED THE TAPESTRY THAT HAD BEEN ROLLED UP AND ALMOST HIDDEN FROM VIEW AND HE'D ABSENTLY TAKEN IT OUT OF THE CLOSET AND SPREAD IT OPEN_

I REALLY CAN'T *SAY*, MRS. CARTER. TAPESTRIES LIKE THAT ARE... ARE... *WHO MADE THIS?*

GRACE!

OH, DEAR!

THE SALSBURY SISTERS HAD SNATCHED THE TAPESTRY FROM ERIC AND ROLLED IT UP AGAIN, APOLOGIZING...

THIS ONE'S NOT A VERY *GOOD EXAMPLE* OF OUR *WORK!*

NO GOOD AT ALL!

WE INTENDED TO *DESTROY* IT!

NO!

BUT THE BRIEF VIEW HE'D HAD OF IT HAD BEEN ENOUGH. ERIC HOLBIEN HAD WAITED ALL HIS *LIFE* FOR THAT MOMENT...

WHEN DID YOU *MAKE* THAT ONE? THAT ONE IS *GOOD!* THAT TAPESTRY IS A *WORK OF ART*... AN EXPRESSION OF *SHEER GENIUS*...

THIS...?

THIS ONE!

SHEEPISHLY, THE SISTERS HAD UNROLLED THE TAPESTRY AGAIN. ERIC'S HEART HAD RACED IN HIS CHEST. HIS EYES HAD MOVED SLOWLY OVER THE MINUTE STITCHES ... THE DREARY SOMBER COLORS...THE EMOTIONAL SWIRLING COMPOSITION. HE'D REACHED OUT, AS IN A DREAM, AND TOUCHED HIS DREAM, AND HIS DREAM HAD BEEN REAL.

THIS...IS ART! THIS...IS GOOD!

WE...WE MADE *THAT* WHEN *MR. GOLDEN* WAS *KILLED!* *REMEMBER*, GIRLS?

YES, *THAT'S IT! I* REMEMBER.

HE WAS *HIT BY A CAR*...

...DOWN BY THE CORNER!

WE *SAW* THE *WHOLE THING!* IT WAS *AWFUL!* THE *BLOOD!* THE *TWISTED BODY. POOR* MR. GOLDEN! WE *MADE THIS THAT VERY NIGHT!*

YES, THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF IT. ERIC HAD TAKEN THE TAPESTRY TO NEW YORK... TO AN ART DEALER FRIEND OF HIS... JUST TO CHECK ON HIS OWN JUDGEMENT..

THIS *IS GOOD*, ERIC! WHO *DID* IT? CAN YOU GET *MORE? EXCELLENT!* SUCH *EXPRESSION*... SUCH *EMOTION!*

HOW MUCH IS IT *WORTH*, MILTON?

I'LL GIVE YOU *FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS* FOR IT!

AND IF I *CAN* GET *MORE* FOR YOU?

I'M *SURE* I'LL BE ABLE TO *SELL* THEM TO THIS *PARTY* I HAVE IN MIND. I'LL BUY *ALL YOU CAN GET*.. IF THEY'RE AS *GOOD* AS *THIS* ONE... FOR *FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS EACH!*

IT'S A *DEAL*, MILTON! *WRITE OUT A CHECK!* AND I'LL BE *BACK SOON*... WITH *OTHERS!*

SO ERIC HAD GONE BACK AND TOLD THE SISTERS...

FIFTY DOLLARS! OH, *DEAR!* THAT'S AN *AWFUL LOT OF MONEY!* AND THIS IS ALL FOR *US!*

I HAD TO *FIGHT* FOR IT, BUT HE *FINALLY GAVE IN!* AND HE WANTS *MORE!*

MORE?!

BUT WE *HAVE* NO MORE LIKE THAT! WE *MADE OTHERS* BUT WE *DESTROYED* THEM!

OH, *NO!* THEN YOU'VE GOT TO *MAKE THEM OVER!*

WE *COULDN'T!* WE WOULDN'T BE *INSPIRED!*

INSPIRED?!

WE *MAKE* TAPESTRIES LIKE THAT *ONLY AFTER WE'VE SEEN A VIOLENT ACCIDENTAL DEATH!*

THE ONE WE MADE AFTER *FATHER* DIED WAS OUR *FIRST!* *HE* FELL BENEATH THE WHEELS OF A *TRAIN!*

AND WE MADE *SIX* AFTER THAT! *MR. GOLDEN'S* WAS OUR *LATEST!* WE *DESTROYED* THE *OTHERS!*

THEN, IF.. IF I COULD *RUSH* YOU TO THE *SCENE* OF AN *ACCIDENTAL DEATH*, YOU'D BE *INSPIRED?* *RIGHT?*

IF WE SAW THE *BODY*

AND THE *BLOOD!*

IT HAD BEEN MADDENING! ERIC HAD HAD TO BUY A RADIO WITH A POLICE WAVELENGTH BAND. HE SAT, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, IN HIS ROOM... LISTENING ... LISTENING ...

CAR 23! CAR 23! GO TO NORTH AND MAIN! BAD ACCI-DENT. *ONE DEAD. TWO HURT!* CAR 23! CAR 23! GO TO...

CHARLOTTE! GRACE! EMMA LOU! HURRY! IT'S *RIGHT NEARBY!*

WHEN ONE OF THOSE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN CALLS HAD COME IN, HE'D RUSHED THE OLD GALS TO THE SPOT. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THEY'D ARRIVE TOO LATE...

OH, THE *BODY'S COVERED UP!*

WE *CAN'T SEE!*

WHAT IF I *UN-COVER...*

STAND BACK, YOU!

BUT THERE'D BEEN THOSE *FORTU-NATE* TIMES WHEN THEY'D ARRIVED *BEFORE* THE POLICE. THE SISTER'S HAD GAWKED AND GASPED AND ERIC HAD KNOWN HE'D HAVE HIS TAPESTRY BY MORNING...

WELL, IT'S *ABOUT TIME!* MY *DOUGH* WAS RUNNING OUT!

THREE TIMES, FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS HAD GONE INTO ERIC'S POCKET WHILE THE SISTERS HAD RECEIVED BUT ONE NINTH THAT AMOUNT...

THIRTY...FORTY... FIFTY...THERE YOU ARE!

OH, MR. HOLBIEN! YOU'RE SO *GOOD* TO US!

IF ONLY THERE WERE *MORE ACCIDENTS,* WE COULD MAKE *MORE TAPESTRIES!*

AND THEN IT HAD SUDDENLY OCCURED TO ERIC! MORE ACCIDENTS! OF COURSE! WHY HADN'T HE THOUGHT OF THAT *BEFORE?* IF THERE *WEREN'T ENOUGH ACCI DENTS* ...HE COULD *CAUSE THEM!* OF COURSE!...

GOING INTO MILLVILLE?

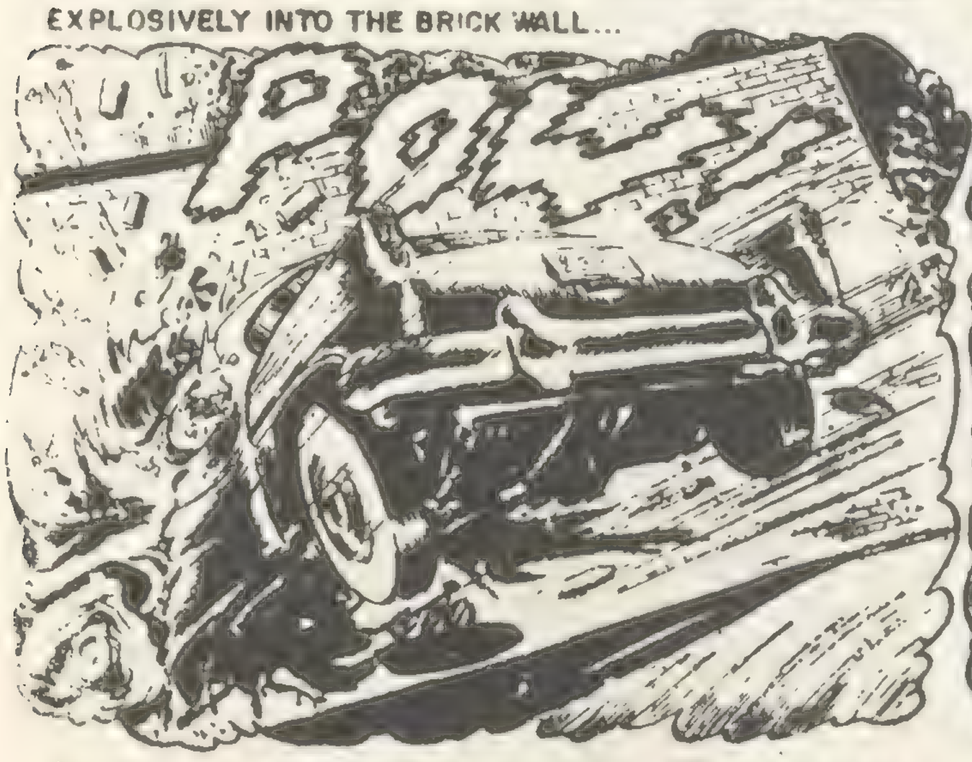
SURE! HOP IN!

SO TONIGHT, HE'D WALKED A SHORT DISTANCE OUT OF TOWN AND HE'D THUMBED A RIDE AND BEEN PICKED UP. AND WHEN HIS POOR UNSUSPECTING VICTIM'D LOOKED THE OTHER WAY...

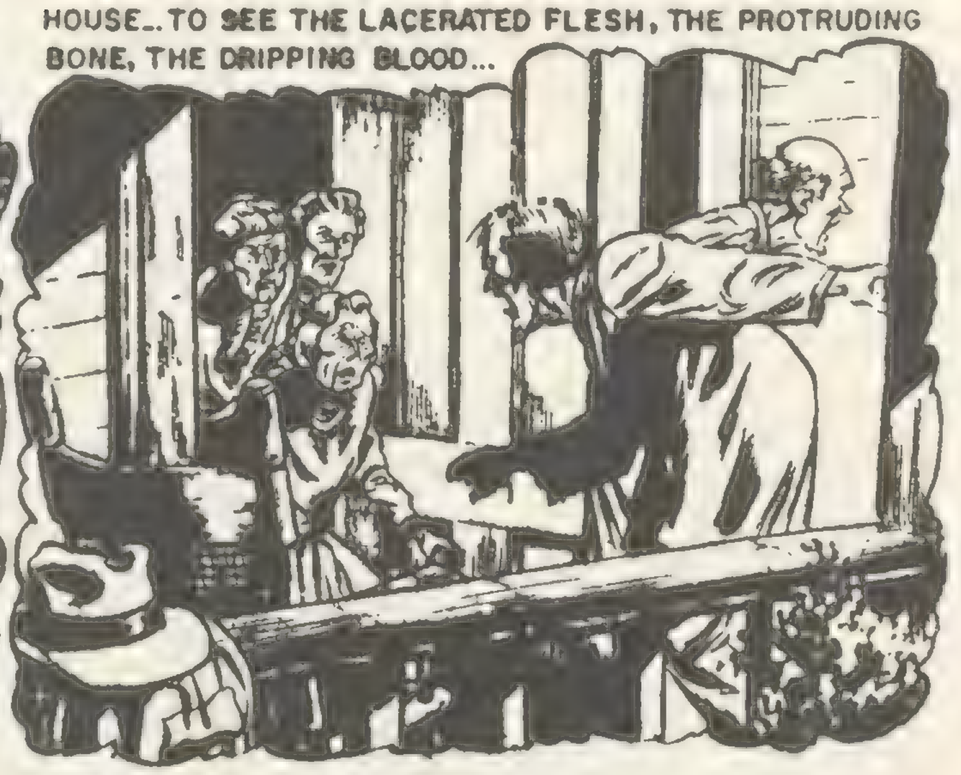
G-G-N-N-N-N-G!

HE'D DRIVEN THE CAR TO THE STREET WHERE THE BOARDING HOUSE STOOD, PLACED THE UNCONSCIOUS MAN'S FOOT ON THE ACCELERATOR, RELEASED THE EMERGENCY BRAKE, AND HOPPED FROM THE CAR...

THE CAR HAD SPED DOWN THE STREET CRAZILY, GATHERING SPEED. THEN IT'D SPUN OUT OF CONTROL AND PLOWED EXPLOSIVELY INTO THE BRICK WALL...



AND HE'D WAITED FOR THE SISTERS TO COME FROM THE HOUSE..TO SEE THE LACERATED FLESH, THE PROTRUDING BONE, THE DRIPPING BLOOD...



AND NOW HE SAT UPON THE PORCH ROCKER WAITING, WHILE UPSTAIRS, A LIGHT GLOWED IN THE WEAVING SISTERS' ROOM...

ERIC ENTERED THE BOARDING HOUSE AND CLIMBED THE STAIRS. MRS. CARTER AND HER OTHER ROOMERS HAD LONG SINCE GONE TO BED AND NOW LAY ENDURING TROUBLED DREAMS OF WHAT THEY'D WITNESSED EARLIER. HE KNOCKED SOFTLY...

THE DOOR OPENED SLOWLY. ERIC ENTERED. HE LOOKED AROUND. THE CLOTH TACKED TAUTLY TO THE TAPESTRY-STRETCHER WAS BARE WHITE AND QUITE BLANK...

ERIC GREW ANGRY. HE THOUGHT OF MILTON WAITING IN NEW YORK WITH HIS CUSTOMER HUNGRY FOR MORE TAPESTRIES. HE THOUGHT OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS AND THE GOOD TIMES IT WOULD BUY. AND HE SHOUTED...

WASN'T THAT ACCIDENT GOOD ENOUGH? DIDN'T YOU SEE THE BODY AND THE BLOOD? WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? START WEAVING!
WE'RE NOT INSPIRED!
WE WEREN'T MOVED!

ERIC SAW THE FIVE HUNDRED DOLLAR CHECK FLYING AWAY ON WINGS OF TEMPERAMENT. HE SCREAMED...

LOOK! I DIDN'T KNOCK HIM COLD FOR NOTHING! I DIDN'T FIX IT SO HIS CAR WOULD SLAM AGAINST THAT WALL AND FOLD UP LIKE THAT FOR NOTHING! I DIDN'T COMMIT MURDER FOR NOTHING!
MURDER!?
OH, DEAR! SO THAT'S IT!

THE OLD LADIES LOOKED AT EACH OTHER IN SHOCKED BEWILDERMENT. THEY TURNED TO ERIC ANGRILY...

THEY CAME AT HIM SLOWLY, GLIDING ON AGED LEGS, FONDLING THE INSTRUMENTS OF THEIR ART...THE SCISSORS AND THE LONG SHARP NEEDLES...

IT'S GOT TO BE AN *ACCIDENT*...LIKE *WHEN WE PUSHED FATHER UNDER THE TRAIN...*
OR LIKE *WHEN WE PUSHED MR. GOLDEN* IN FRONT OF THAT *CAR...*
OR THE *OTHERS* WE SO *CLEVERLY MANAGED* WHILE YOU WERE LISTENING TO YOUR *STUPID LITTLE RADIO...*

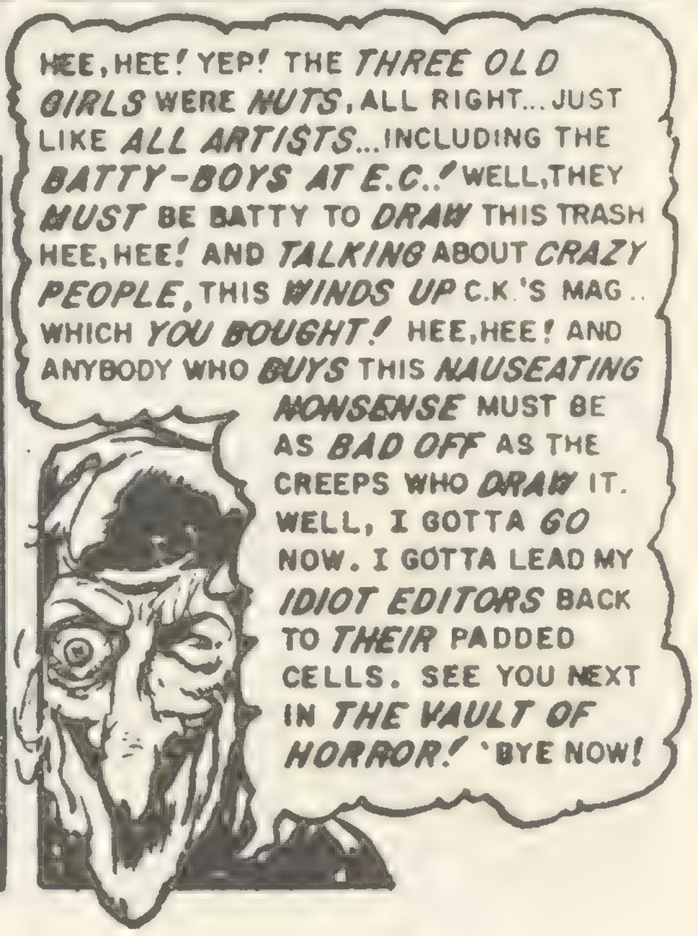
THEY STOOD OVER HIM LIKE THE THREE WITCHES IN MACBETH... OVER THEIR LIVING, WRITHING CAULDRON...

MRS. CARTER AND HER ROOMERS TOSSED IN THEIR TROUBLED SLEEPS, BUT NEVER HEARD THE MUFFLED SCREAMS THAT CAME FROM THE WEAVING SISTERS' ROOM ...NEVER HEARD THE SNIPPING OF THEIR SCISSORS ... THE CLICKING OF THEIR NEEDLES... THEIR GIGGLES OF SATISFACTION...

AND WHEN ERIC'S FRIEND MILTON STEPPED FORWARD IN HIS GALLERY TO GREET THE THREE KINDLY-LOOKING OLD LADIES WHO ENTERED WITH THEIR LONG ROUND PACKAGE, HE NEVER DREAMED OF THE HORRORS THEY WERE CAPABLE OF WEAVING...

NOT UNTIL THEY UNROLLED THEIR LATEST TAPESTRY OF CROCHETED VEINS AND EMBROIDERED ARTERIES AND SEWN MUSCLES AND TENDONS AND FINGERNAILS AND HAIR AND TACKED-DOWN EYEBALLS AND EARS AND STRUNG-UP BONES AND CARTILAGE..

IT WAS A *WORK OF ART*, ALL RIGHT. IT WAS *ERIC HOLBIEN ALL OVER!*


HEE, HEE! YEP! THE *THREE OLD GIRLS* WERE *NUTS*, ALL RIGHT... JUST LIKE *ALL ARTISTS*...INCLUDING THE *BATTY-BOYS AT E.C.!* WELL, THEY *MUST* BE BATTY TO *DRAW* THIS TRASH HEE, HEE! AND *TALKING* ABOUT *CRAZY PEOPLE*, THIS *WINDS UP* C.K.'S MAG.. WHICH *YOU BOUGHT!* HEE, HEE! AND ANYBODY WHO *BUYS* THIS *NAUSEATING NONSENSE* MUST BE AS *BAD OFF* AS THE CREEPS WHO *DRAW* IT. WELL, I GOTTA *GO* NOW. I GOTTA LEAD MY *IDIOT EDITORS* BACK TO *THEIR* PADDED CELLS. SEE YOU NEXT IN *THE VAULT OF HORROR!* 'BYE NOW!

HOMESICK!

HE COULD SEE THE SPACE-STATION NOW, FLOATING LIKE SOME GIGANTIC WEIRDLY-SHAPED LIFE-RAFT UPON THE BLACK SEA OF SPACE. HE COULD SEE ITS LANDING RAMP AND ITS HATCHES AND THE LAUNCHING AREA WHERE, ONE YEAR BEFORE, HE... DAVID TODD... AND HIS BEST FRIEND .. LAWRENCE ARDSLEY... HAD TAKEN OFF FOR MAN'S FIRST TRIP TO MARS. AND A THOUSAND MILES BEYOND, HE COULD SEE THE GREEN SPHERE OF EARTH... HOME...

IT *WON'T* BE *LONG NOW*, LYNN, BABY! IT *WON'T* BE LONG *NOW*! OH, *HONEY*... IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW I'VE *DREAMED* OF THIS *MOMENT*!

YES, DAVID WAS COMING HOME... HOME TO LYNN ARDSLEY... LARRY'S WIFE. BUT LYNN WASN'T LARRY'S WIFE ANY LONGER. LYNN WAS A WIDOW! LARRY HAD DIED...

HELLO, SPACE STATION! HELLO... SPACE STATION! THIS IS COLONEL TODD ON MARS SPACE-ROCKET NUMBER X-2! COME IN, SPACE STATION! COME IN...

DAVID FLIPPED ON THE RECEIVER AND WAITED FOR THE SPACE-STATION TO ANSWER. HE THOUGHT ABOUT LYNN... BEAUTIFUL, DESIRABLE LYNN. HE THOUGHT ABOUT THAT NIGHT... THE NIGHT SHE AND DAVID HAD PLANNED LARRY'S MURDER!

IT WOULD BE SO *EASY*, BABY! LARRY WOULD NEVER GIVE YOU UP! BUT *UP THERE*... ON *MARS*... WELL... *ANYTHING* COULD HAPPEN...

OH, *DAVID*! I'M... I'M *SCARED*! WHAT IF HE *SUSPECTS*?

AL WILLIAMSON

SUSPECTS THAT YOU AND I ARE IN *LOVE*! NOT A *CHANCE*! WE'VE BEEN TOO *CAREFUL*...

DAVID! CAN'T WE *WAIT*.. UNTIL YOU *BOTH GET BACK*? PERHAPS IF I *TOLD* HIM I *DIDN'T LOVE* HIM ANY LONGER... IF I *ASKED* HIM FOR A *DIVORCE*...

HE WOULDN'T *GIVE* IT TO YOU, LYNN! YOU *KNOW* LARRY! HE'S TOO *PROUD*! *NO*! THIS IS THE *ONLY* WAY! MY *ONE CHANCE*...

WHAT WILL YOU *TELL* THEM? I MEAN, WHEN YOU GET *BACK*...?

I'LL TELL THEM THAT LARRY *CONTRACTED A DISEASE*... AND *DIED* THERE... ON *MARS*!

THERE WILL BE *OTHER SHIPS*, DAVID! OTHERS *AFTER* YOURS! YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE *SURE* THEY *DON'T FIND HIS BODY*...

DAVID REMEMBERED THOSE TRIPS...THOSE REGULAR TRIPS UP TO THE SPACE-STATION TO CHECK ON THE PROGRESS OF SPACE-ROCKET X-2'S CONSTRUCTION...

SHE'S ALMOST FINISHED, DAVE!

ANOTHER WEEK AND WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY, LARRY...

THE SPACE STATION HAD BEEN STARTED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT BACK IN 1955. IT HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN 1972. IN 1986, SPACE-ROCKET X-1 HAD SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED A TRIP TO THE MOON AND BACK. NOW, S-R X-2 WAS NEARING COMPLETION, MAN'S FIRST ATTEMPT TO REACH *MARS*...

LARRY! DAVID! TOMORROW YOU LEAVE! IT WILL TAKE YOU APPROXIMATELY FIVE MONTHS TO GET THERE..

YOU WILL STAY IN *CONSTANT TOUCH* WITH US THROUGH *MICRO-WAVE RADIO SIGNALS*. YOU WILL REPORT EVERY THING YOU FIND... EVERY *DETAIL*. IF MARS *DOES* HAVE A CIVILIZATION... AND IT PROVES *HOSTILE*... YOU WILL RETURN *AT ONCE*! MORE THAN LIKELY YOU WILL FIND *NO SIGN OF LIFE* ON MARS. *EXPLORE*! *PHOTOGRAPH*! *NOTE* ALL YOU SEE! GOOD LUCK!

THANK YOU, SIR!

AND THAT LAST NIGHT ON EARTH! DAVID REMEMBERED IT SO WELL! HE, AND LYNN, AND LARRY...TOGETHER.. WISHING EACH OTHER HEALTH AND LUCK AND ALL GOOD THINGS... AND LARRY LAUGHING...NOT KNOWING THAT A WISH OF DEATH WAS IN DAVID'S AND LYNN'S HEARTS...

WELL! HERE'S TO YOU AND LYNN, LARRY! AND MANY MORE YEARS OF WEDDED BLISS!

TH-THANKS, DAVID!

HEY! WE'RE OUT OF ICE! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

...THOSE STOLEN MOMENTS TOGETHER... WHEN LARRY WAS OUT OF THE ROOM...

DARLING! DARLING! WHEN I GET BACK... AND YOU'RE FREE...

OH, HOLD ME, DAVID! HOLD ME...

...AND THAT MORNING AT THE ROCKET-PORT, WATCHING LARRY KISS LYNN GOODBYE, AND HATING HIM FOR IT...

GOOD-BYE, HONEY!

GOOD-BYE LARRY! TAKE CARE..

... AND THEN THAT LAST SHUTTLE TRIP TO THE SPACE-STATION...

YOU...YOU'VE GOT A WONDERFUL GAL THERE, LARRY!

DON'T I KNOW IT!

DAVID COULD SEE THE LAUNCHING SITE ON THE SPACE-STATION AS THOUGH IT WERE YESTERDAY... CRAWLING WITH BRASS COME TO SEE THE MOMENTOUS EVENT

STAND BY FOR TAKE-OFF! COLONELS *TODD* AND *ARDSLEY*... *BOARD SHIP!*

WELL! *SO LONG*, EVERYBODY!

SEE YOU IN A *YEAR!*

GOOD LUCK, YOU TWO!

THE SECONDS TICKING OFF... THE INTERMINABLE TIME UNTIL...

THERE THEY GO...

THOSE FIVE MONTHS ABOARD THE S-RX-2 WERE CLOUDED MEMORIES TO DAVID, NOW. A MIST OF HATE, AND NERVOUS PLANNING, AND HUNGRY THOUGHTS OF LYNN... BACK ON EARTH! AND THEN...

THERE SHE IS, DAVID! *MARS...*

STRAP IN, LARRY. WE'RE PICKING UP *MARS'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD..*

THE BLINDING PRESSURE OF LETTING DOWN... THE BLASTING OF THE ROCKET ENGINES AND THE SHUDDERING OF THE SHIP...

WE'RE GOING IN!

HOLD TIGHT!

AND THEN THE SILENCE. THE SILENCE OF MARS... ALL AROUND THEM...

HELLO, SPACE STATION! *HELLO!* THIS IS *TODD* ON *S-RX-2*.! WE'VE *MADE IT*.! WE'RE *DOWN*! *STAND BY*...

TRANSMIT THESE READINGS, DAVE! *ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE* AT *SURFACE*...

A HUNDRED OBSERVATIONS.. A THOUSAND DESCRIPTIONS ...HOURS OF TRANSMITTING SCIENTIFIC DATA...AND THEN..

AND NOW... WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE THE SHIP! ARDSLEY AND I HAVE OUR SPACE-SUITS ON EVEN THOUGH THE ATMOSPHERE APPEARS ABLE TO SUSTAIN US!

TELL 'EM WE'LL TRY TAKING 'EM OFF AFTER A WHILE, DAVE!

...THEN STEPPING OUT ONTO THE BARREN RED WASTE-LAND OF THE RED PLANET...

THAT'S ENOUGH PHOTOGRAPHS, LARRY! LET'S TRY TAKING OFF OUR HELMETS!

RIGHT, DAVE!

AND THAT MOMENT... THAT LONG AWAITED MOMENT ARRIVED! DAVE SLIPPED HIS GUN FROM ITS HOLSTER

IT'S *OKAY*, DAVE! LIKE BEING ON A *MOUNTAIN-TOP*...ON *EARTH*! IT'S... *WHAT*... *WHAT'S THE GUN FOR?*

FOR *YOU*, LARRY! I'M GOING TO *KILL* YOU.

DAVID REMEMBERED HOW LARRY'S AMAZED EXPRESSION FROZE AS HE FINGERED THE TRIGGER...

HOW THE SHOT SHATTERED THE THICK RED SILENCE, AND LARRY PITCHING FORWARD...

...THEN... STANDING OVER HIM AS THE REPORT ECHOED BACK AND FORTH FROM ANGRY DUNE TO ANGRY DUNE ...

SHE'S *MINE*, NOW, LARRY! *LYNN'S MINE*...

DAVID REMEMBERED HOW HE BURIED LARRY IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE...

THEN REPORTED...

THIS IS TODD, ON S-RX-2! WE'VE JUST COME BACK INSIDE! ARDSLEY DOESN'T FEEL WELL! WE...WE TOOK OFF OUR SPACE-HELMETS!

DAY AFTER DAY...

HE'S GETTING WORSE! THE DRUGS IN THE MED KIT DON'T HELP! HE'S DYING...

...UNTIL...

COLONEL ARDSLEY IS *DEAD!* HIS *LAST REQUEST* WAS THAT I *JETTISON HIS BODY INTO SPACE* ON MY WAY *BACK!* I *PROMISED!* I'M... *COMING HOME*... NOW!

HELLO...SPACE STATION! HELLO...SPACE STATION! THIS IS COLONEL TODD ON MARS SPACE-ROCKET X-2! WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER?

DAVID'S RECEIVER REMAINED SILENT! THE SPACE-STATION LOOMING LARGER AND LARGER NOW, DID NOT RESPOND...

STAND BY..! I'M COMING IN!

THE LAST OF THE S-RX-2'S FUEL WAS USED UP IN SLOWING THE SHIP! IT DRIFTED TOWARD THE LANDING RAMP, SUCKED IN BY THE HUGE TRACTION MAGNETS...

GET THAT *SHUTTLE TO EARTH* READY BOYS! I'VE GOT A *DATE*...

A DEATHLY SILENCE HUNG OVER THE SPACE-STATION AS DAVID EMERGED FROM THE S-RX-2! THE STATION WAS DESERTED...

WHAT'S GOING *ON* HERE! WHERE *IS* EVERYBODY! THERE'S *NO SHUTTLE ROCKET HERE!*

DAVID DARTED DOWN A HATCH INTO THE SPACE STATION'S QUARTERS...

HEY! YOU *KNEW* I WAS COMING BACK! WHERE *ARE* YOU ALL? WHAT'S THE *MATTER?*

A LOUDSPEAKER BEHIND DAVID CRACKLED ON! A VOICE EXPLODED FROM BEHIND ITS GRILLED FACE..

COLONEL TODD! THIS IS *GENERAL MINORLY, MEDICAL CORPS*...ON *EARTH!* IT'S *MY DUTY* TO *INFORM* YOU THAT...

...SINCE *COLONEL LAWRENCE ARDSLEY CONTRACTED* AND *DIED* OF AN *UNKNOWN DISEASE* WHICH *DID NOT RESPOND TO ANY KNOWN EARTH DRUGS* WHILE *ON MARS*...AND THAT SINCE *YOU ALSO* WERE *OBVIOUSLY EXPOSED* TO *THAT DISEASE* AND *MIGHT AT THIS TIME BE A CARRIER OF IT...*

...THAT FOR THE *SAFETY* OF THE *TWO AND ONE HALF BILLION PEOPLES OF EARTH,* YOU ARE *HEREBY QUARANTINED* ON THAT *SPACE-STATION...FOR LIFE!*

GENERAL MINORLY'S VOICE SOFTENED...

I'M *SORRY,* DAVE! *GENUINELY SORRY!* IT'S GOING TO BE *TOUGH, I KNOW!* BUT IT'S THE *LIVES* OF EVERYONE *HERE* AGAINST *YOURS!* YOU'LL FIND RATIONS...BOOKS...

BUT DAVID TODD DID NOT HEAR GENERAL MINORLY'S SOOTHING VOICE! DAVID TODD WAS CRYING...

THE END

YOU'LL BE JARRED BY THE STARTLING CLIMAX OF THIS SHOCKING NARRATIVE!

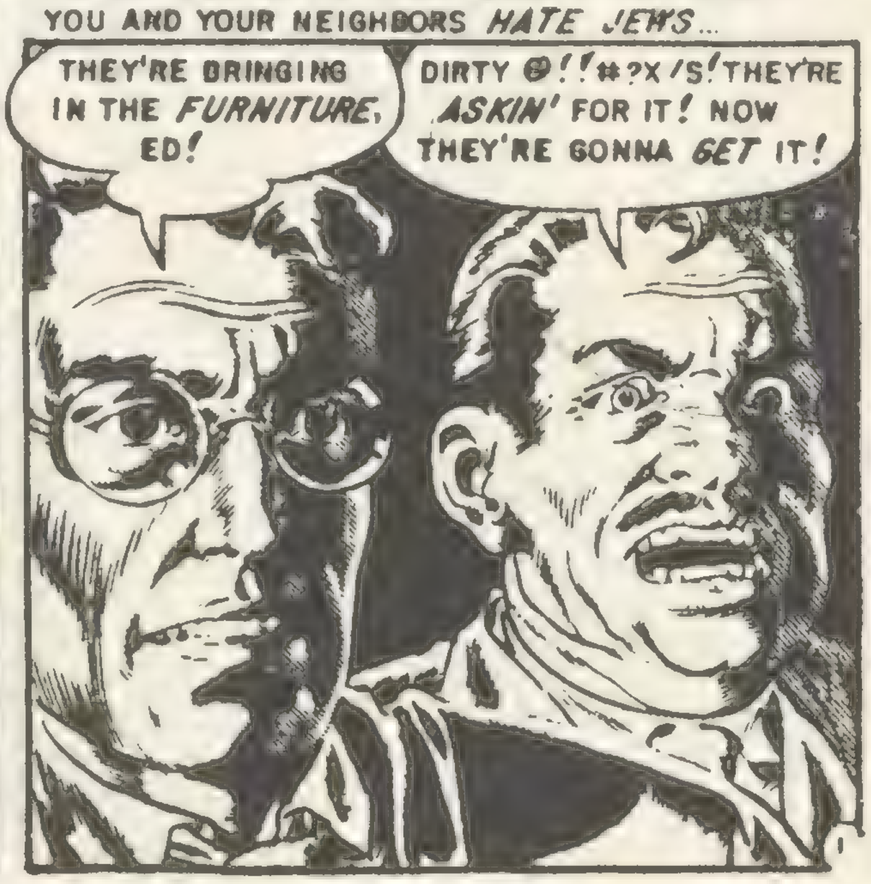
HATE!

AT THE CURB, THE BIG RED MOVING-VAN STANDS QUIETLY... ITS REAR DOORS GAPING OPEN LIKE THE MOUTH OF SOME MECHANICAL MONSTER! EVEN NOW, THE HUSKY MOVERS ARE PULLING ARTICLES OF FURNITURE FROM WITHIN IT... LINING THE SIDEWALK BEFORE THE QUAINT WHITE HOUSE! ON THE PORCH A MAN AND A WOMAN STAND SILENTLY, STARING AT THE YELLOW SCRAP OF PAPER TACKED UPON THE SPOTLESS DOOR...

A SHOCK SUSPENSTORY
WHAT... WHAT DOES IT SAY, DAVE?
IT... IT SAYS, 'DON'T MOVE IN... JEW! YOU'LL BE SORRY! WE DON'T WANT JEWS IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD!'
BOOM

YOUR NAME IS *JOHN SMITH!* YOU'RE AN *AMERICAN* WITH A *GOOD AMERICAN NAME!* YOU'RE A *CHURCHGOER*... A *FAMILY* MAN... A *RESPECTED MEMBER* OF YOUR *COMMUNITY!* YOU'RE *WATCHING* THAT COUPLE ACROSS THE STREET *READ THE NOTE YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS HAVE TACKED THERE...*

YES, JOHN SMITH! THEY'RE *GOING INSIDE!* PERHAPS THERE'S NO PLACE *ELSE* FOR THEM TO GO! YOU *HATE* THEM, *DON'T* YOU JOHN? YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS *HATE JEWS*...



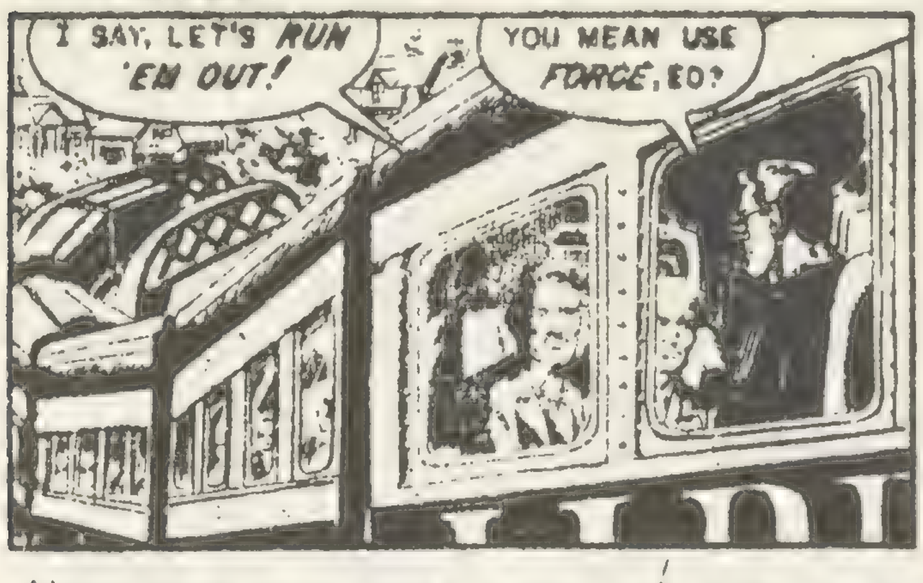
IT DOESN'T *MATTER* THAT THEIR *PARENTS* AND THEIR *PARENTS' PARENTS* WERE *BORN HERE, DOES* IT, JOHN? THEY'RE *JEWS!* THAT'S *ALL* THAT MATTERS! YOU THINK THEY'RE *DIFFERENT*... AND *YOU DON'T WANT THEM AROUND*...

SO NOW THEY'RE MOVED IN, JOHN! THE THREATS DIDN'T CHANGE THEIR MINDS! THE PHONE CALLS.. THE LETTERS..THE SNIDE REMARKS YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS MADE! THEY DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER TO THEM! PERHAPS THEY'RE *USED* TO THAT SORT OF THING, JOHN..

WELL, LET'S *BREAK IT UP, BOYS!* WE'LL *TALK* ABOUT IT *TOMORROW... ON THE TRAIN!*
OKAY, JOHN! HEY! *WHAT'S* THEIR *NAMES* AGAIN, CHARLIE?
GOLD! DAVE AND ETHEL *GOLD!*

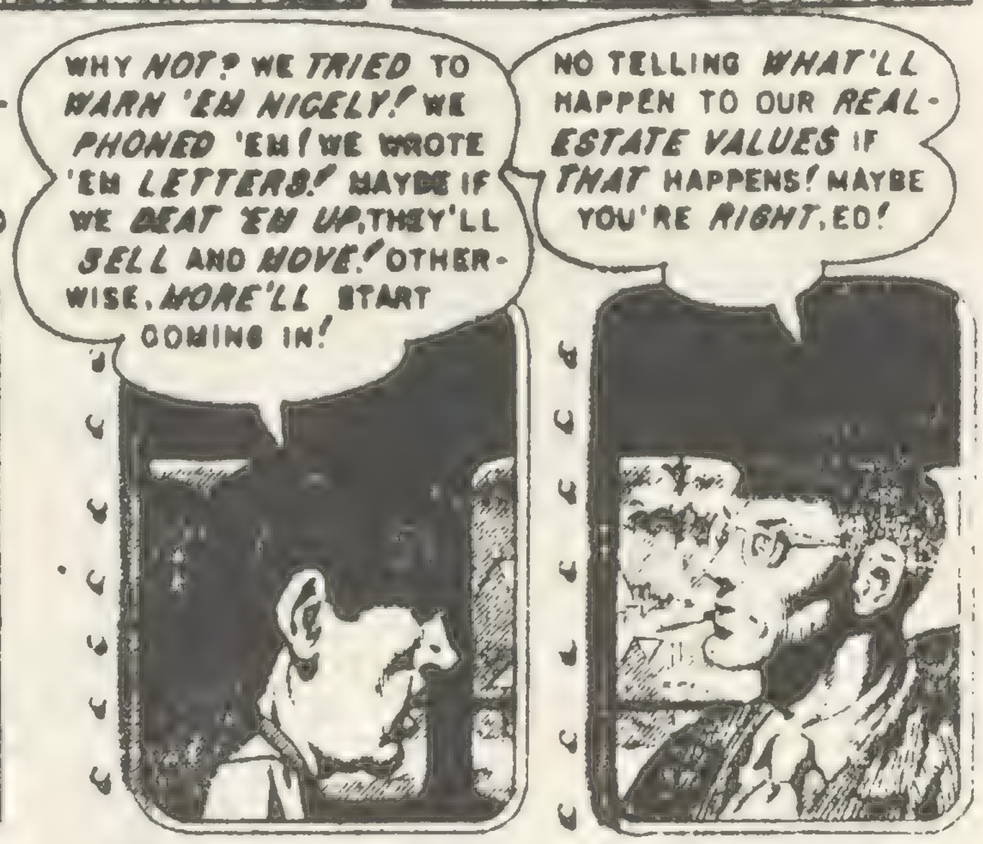
WHEN DID YOU *FIRST* LEARN TO *HATE*, JOHN? DID YOUR *MOTHER* TEACH IT TO YOU? DID YOUR CHILDHOOD *FRIENDS* WISE YOU UP? DID YOU LEARN IT FROM YOUR *WIFE*...YOUR *CHILD?* DID ED, YOUR *NEIGHBOR*, TIP YOU OFF? *WHEN*, JOHN? *WHEN DID YOU BECOME INFECTED WITH THE DISEASE CALLED HATE?*...

DID YOUR *FATHER*... A SMALL TOWN DOCTOR... TELL YOU THAT, JOHN? DID *HE* LIST THE *GENETIC DIFFERENCES* BETWEEN YOU AND THEM? DID *HE* TELL YOU THEIR *BLOOD* WAS DIFFERENT... THEIR *BONES*... THEIR *HEARTS?* HE WAS A *DOCTOR*, JOHN! HE SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN*...

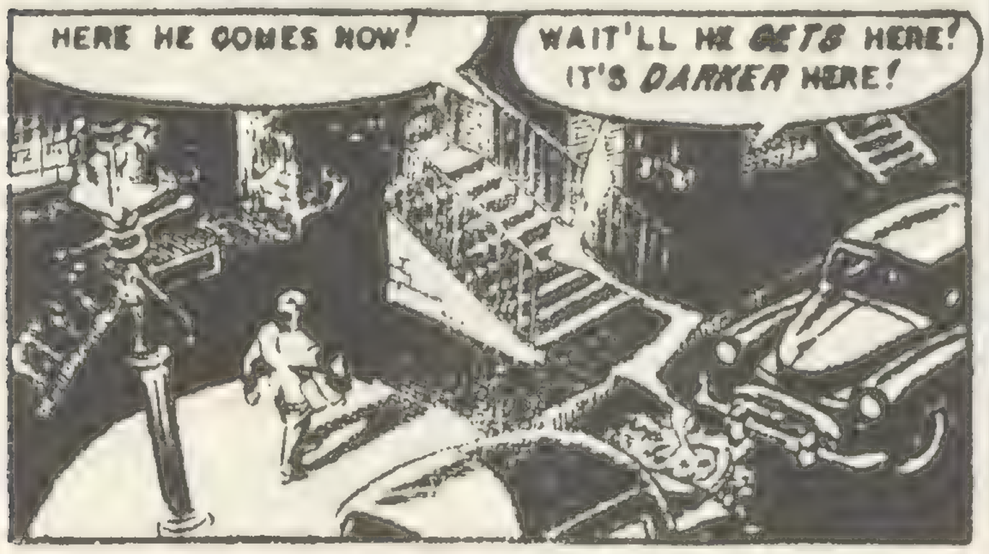


WHY *NOT?* WE *TRIED* TO *WARN 'EM NICELY!* WE *PHONED* 'EM! WE WROTE 'EM *LETTERS!* MAYBE IF WE *BEAT 'EM UP*, THEY'LL *SELL* AND *MOVE!* OTHERWISE, *MORE'LL* START COMING IN!

NO TELLING *WHAT'LL* HAPPEN TO OUR *REAL-ESTATE VALUES* IF *THAT* HAPPENS! MAYBE YOU'RE *RIGHT*, ED!



HE TAKES THE SAME TRAIN YOU DO, DOESN'T HE, JOHN? HE WEARS THE SAME KIND OF CLOTHES... EATS THE SAME KIND OF FOOD . . . SMOKES THE SAME BRAND OF CIGARETTES... ROOTS FOR THE SAME BASEBALL TEAM! BUT HE'S A *JEW!* SO YOU AND ED AND THE OTHERS WAIT FOR HIM ONE NIGHT...



AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE UPON HIM... BEATING... KICKING... SWEARING...

AND YOU'RE A LITTLE SICK THAT NIGHT WHEN YOU GET HOME, AREN'T YOU, JOHN? THERE'S BLOOD-STAINS ON YOUR SHIRT... BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS! YOU AND THE OTHERS DID A GOOD JOB, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU DON'T SEE MUCH OF HIM AFTER THAT NIGHT, DO YOU, JOHN? HE TAKES A DIFFERENT TRAIN, NOW! HE CROSSES THE STREET TO AVOID YOU! BUT HE *DOESN'T MOVE*, DOES HE?...

IT'S BEGINNING TO SNOWBALL, ISN'T IT JOHN? IT'S GETTING *MESSY* NOW! YOU HADN'T PLANNED ON GOING *THAT* FAR, HAD YOU?...

THE PLANS ARE MADE! THE HATE FESTERS! YOU DON'T EVEN HEAR YOUR WIFE MARY'S WORDS! YOU'RE TOO ENGROSSED IN WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR DAVE AND ETHEL GOLD...

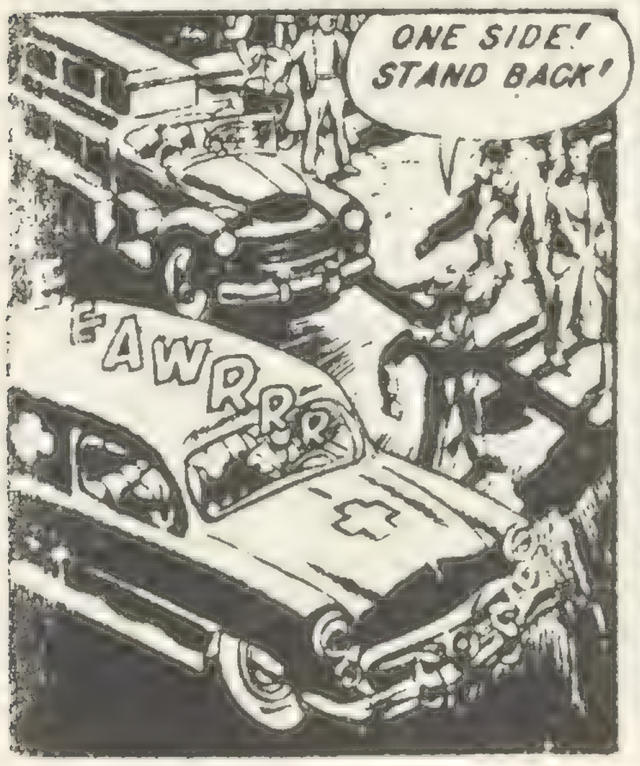
I SAID YOUR *MOTHER'S* COMING TO *VISIT* US, JOHN! SHE WROTE!
EH? OH! *THAT'S* NICE! YOU... YOU BETTER GO ON UP *WITHOUT* ME, MARY! I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO *DO* TONIGHT!

AND THEN YOU'RE OUT THERE, JOHN... UNDER THE BLACK STAR-STUDDED SKY... WITH THE BOYS... WHISPERING...

THE LIGHTED MATCH, TOSSED ON THE GASOLINE-SOAKED SHINGLES, ERUPTS INTO AN ORANGE GLOW! YOU WATCH AS THE HUNGRY FLAMES LEAP UP THE SIDES OF THE QUAINT WHITE HOUSE..

THEY'RE UP THERE..ON THE SECOND FLOOR,..SCREAMING HYSTERICALLY! THE FIERY LIGHT OF THE CONSUMING FLAMES SILHOUETTES THEM...

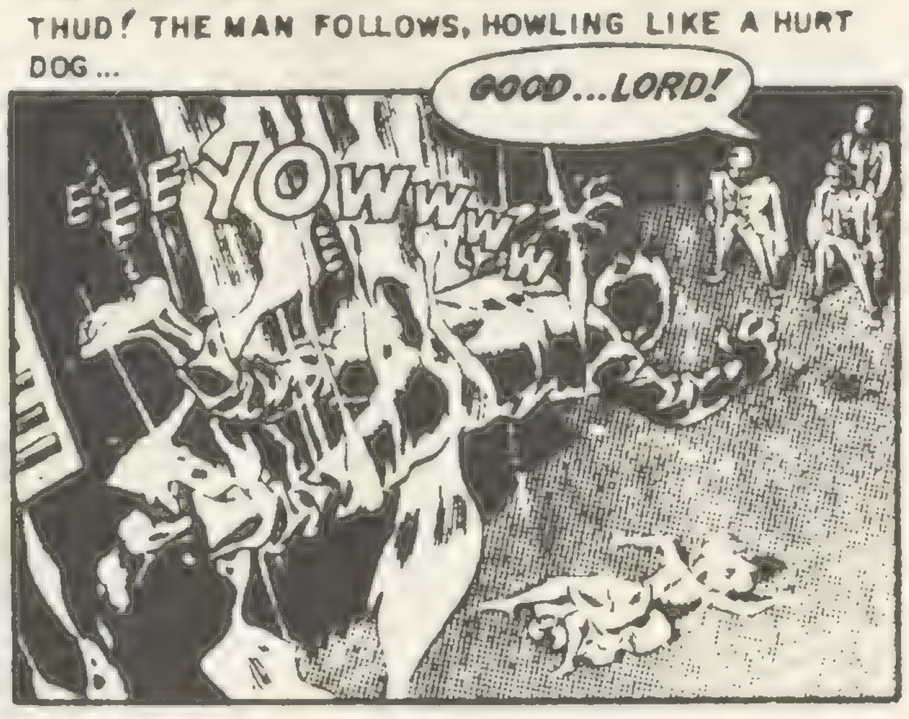
AND THEN THE CONFUSION AS THE FIRE ENGINES ARRIVE! THE WAILING OF THE AMBULANCE SIREN..



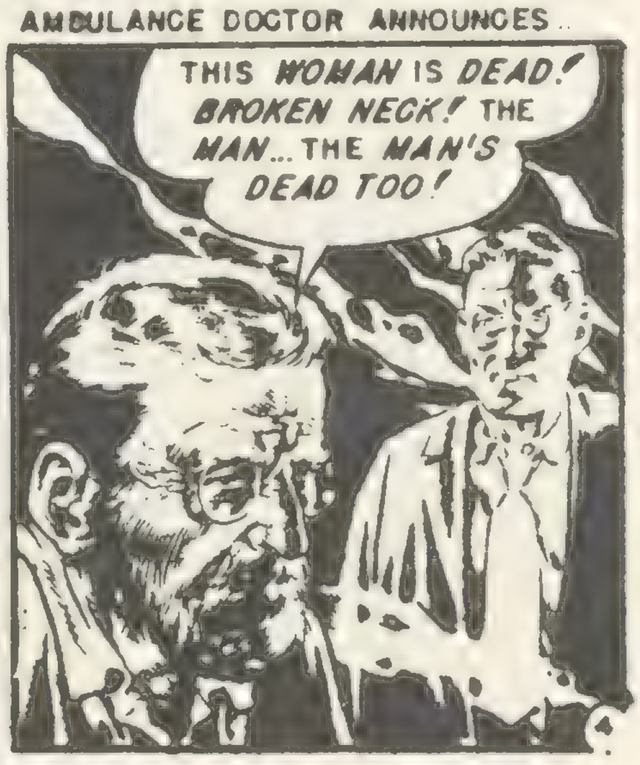
THE PANIC, AS THE NEIGHBORHOOD POURS OUT OF ITS HOUSES...

SOON THE HOUSE IS A ROARING INFERNO! YOU'RE UNEASY, JOHN! WHY DON'T THEY COME OUT? THE WHOLE BOTTOM FLOOR IS A MASS OF FLAME! SUDDENLY...

THE WOMAN LEAPS FIRST...HER BODY LIMP, LIKE A RAG DOLL! SHE HITS THE GROUND WITH A DULL THUD! THE MAN FOLLOWS, HOWLING LIKE A HURT DOG...



AND THE RELIEF WHEN THE FLAMES OF HATE ARE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL... TEMPORARY RELIEF, FOR THE AMBULANCE DOCTOR ANNOUNCES..



WERE THEY *DIFFERENT* FROM YOU, JOHN SMITH? DID THEY HAVE TO *DIE* BECAUSE OF IT? GO BACK TO YOUR HOME, JOHN! STAND AND WATCH FROM YOUR WINDOW AS THE LAST WHISP OF SMOKE FADES AWAY FROM THE BLACKENED SKELETON OF THEIR ONCE LOVELY HOME...

YOU... YOU AND THE BOYS *KILLED* THEM, JOHN!

IT WAS AN *ACCIDENT*, MARY! WE ONLY WANTED TO *SCARE* 'EM!

WHY, JOHN? WHY DID THIS HAVE TO *HAPPEN*?

DON'T GO *SOFT*, MARY! THEY WERE *JEWS*! *WE DON'T WANT JEWS*! THEY'RE *NO GOOD*!

JOHN! JOHN! IS THAT MY *SON TALKING*?

MOTHER SMITH?

MA! WE DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN!

NO! BUT *I* HEARD! I *HEARD IT ALL*! I'M ...I'M *ASHAMED* OF YOU, JOHN!

HEY, JOHN! THEY'RE STARTIN' TO SNOOP AROUND! THEY'RE...OH...

DID *HE* HELP YOU? DID *HE* HELP YOU *KILL THEM*?

PLEASE, MA! *ED!* THIS IS MY *MOTHER*!

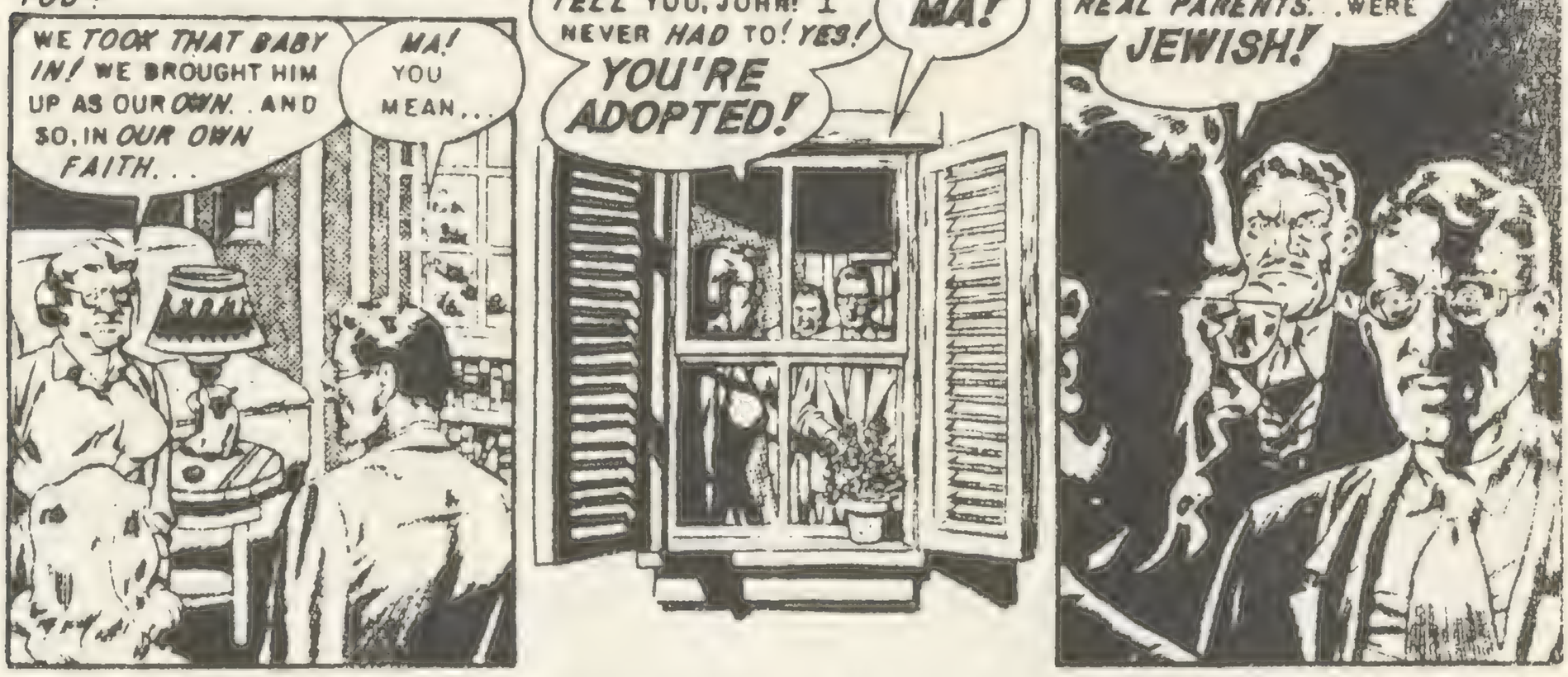
I'M *NOT* YOUR MOTHER! NOT YOUR *REAL* MOTHER!

MA! ED'S MY *NEIGHBOR*! *PLEASE!*

I... I BETTER *GO*, JOHN!

NO! STAY! LISTEN! MY HUSBAND WAS A *DOCTOR*! ONE NIGHT THEY *SENT* FOR HIM! THERE'D BEEN AN *ACCIDENT*! A *MAN KILLED*! HIS *PREGNANT WIFE INJURED*! MY HUSBAND DELIVERED THE *BABY* BEFORE SHE *DIED*!

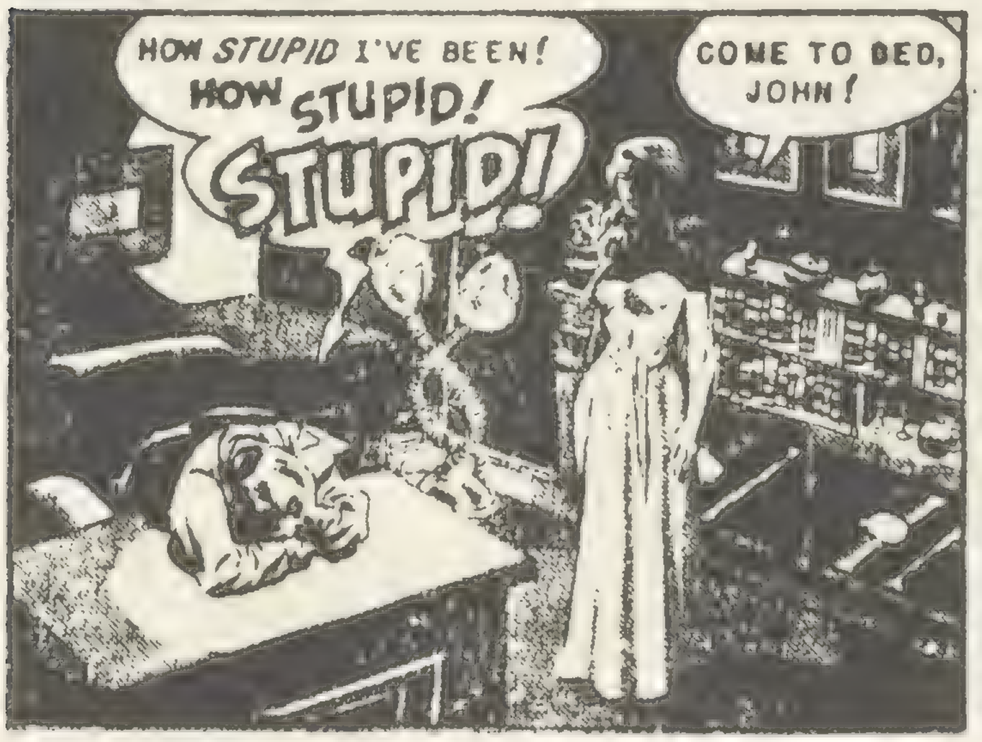
ARE YOU *LISTENING*, JOHN? *ARE YOU?*


WE *TOOK THAT BABY IN!* WE BROUGHT HIM UP AS OUR *OWN*. . AND SO, IN *OUR OWN FAITH*. . .
MA! YOU MEAN. . .
I NEVER INTENDED TO *TELL* YOU, JOHN! I NEVER *HAD* TO! *YES!* *YOU'RE ADOPTED!*
MA!
YOUR *PARENTS*. . . YOUR *REAL PARENTS*. . .WERE *JEWISH!*

ARE YOU DIFFERENT, JOHN? ARE YOU DIFFERENT, *NOW?* DO YOU *FEEL* ANY DIFFERENT? DO YOU *LOOK* ANY DIFFERENT? ARE YOU THE *SAME* MAN YOU WERE *TEN MINUTES AGO*. . .WATCHING THAT LAST WHISP OF SMOKE FADE AWAY. . .

NOW LOOK UP, JOHN! LOOK AT ED! LOOK HOW HE'S STARING AT YOU! DO YOU *SEE* IT, JOHN? DO YOU SEE THE *HATE*. . .THERE. . . IN HIS EYES. . .

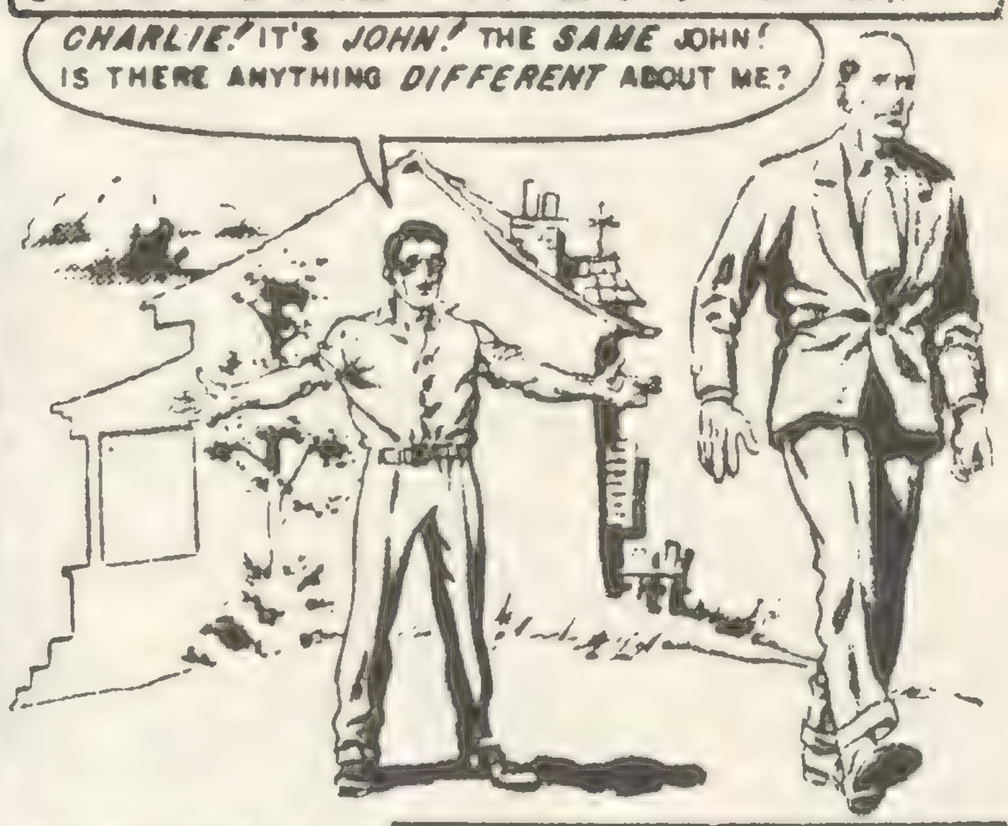
WHAT *NOW*, JOHN? WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW, NOW THAT YOU'VE FOUND OUT. . .



CAN YOU *SLEEP*, JOHN? CAN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES AND *NOT* SEE THOSE SILHOUETTES AGAINST THE FIERY FLAMES. . . THOSE SCREAMING FIGURES. . . FALLING. . .LIKE RAG DOLLS?

AND HOW DO YOU LIKE IT, JOHN, WHEN THE BOYS TURN AWAY WHEN YOU SIT NEXT TO THEM ON THE TRAIN?...

OR WHEN THEY CROSS THE STREETS TO AVOID YOU?...



HOW ABOUT THE TIME YOUR SON COMES HOME FROM SCHOOL .. RAGGED .TORN...CUT..BRUISED?...

YOU'RE JOHN SMITH! YOU'RE AN AMERICAN, JOHN! HOW CAN THEY DO THIS TO YOU? HOW?...

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE, JOHN? WHAT MADE YOU HATE THEM? WHY DO THEY HATE YOU NOW?

HATE IS DEEP, JOHN! HATE IS IMBEDDED! WHERE DO WE LEARN IT? WHO TEACHES IT TO US? HOW CAN IT BE UNTAUGHT? LOOK JOHN! THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU ..THERE...IN THAT DARK PLACE...

THE BEATING IS PAINFUL, ISN'T IT JOHN? IS IT YOUR PUNISHMENT? MUST PAIN BE THE ONLY TEACHER? CAN'T WE LEARN WITHOUT PAIN? CAN'T WE LEARN TO LOVE...INSTEAD OF TO HATE? YOU'RE LEARNING NOW, AREN'T YOU? THE KICKING...THE SWEARING ...IT'S TEACHING YOU...

BUT THE OTHERS! WHEN WILL THEY LEARN?

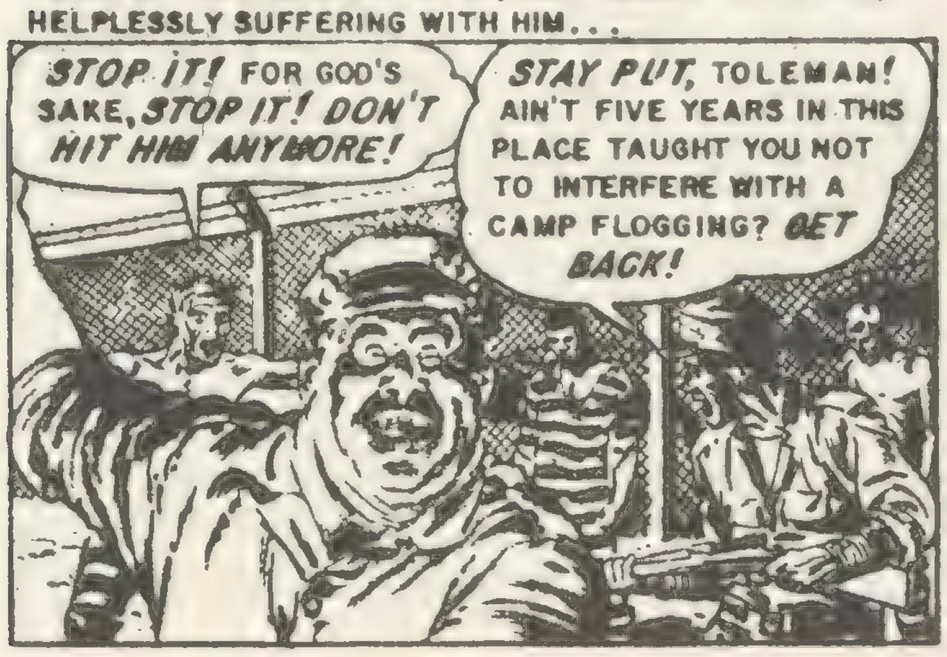
THE END

DOG FOOD

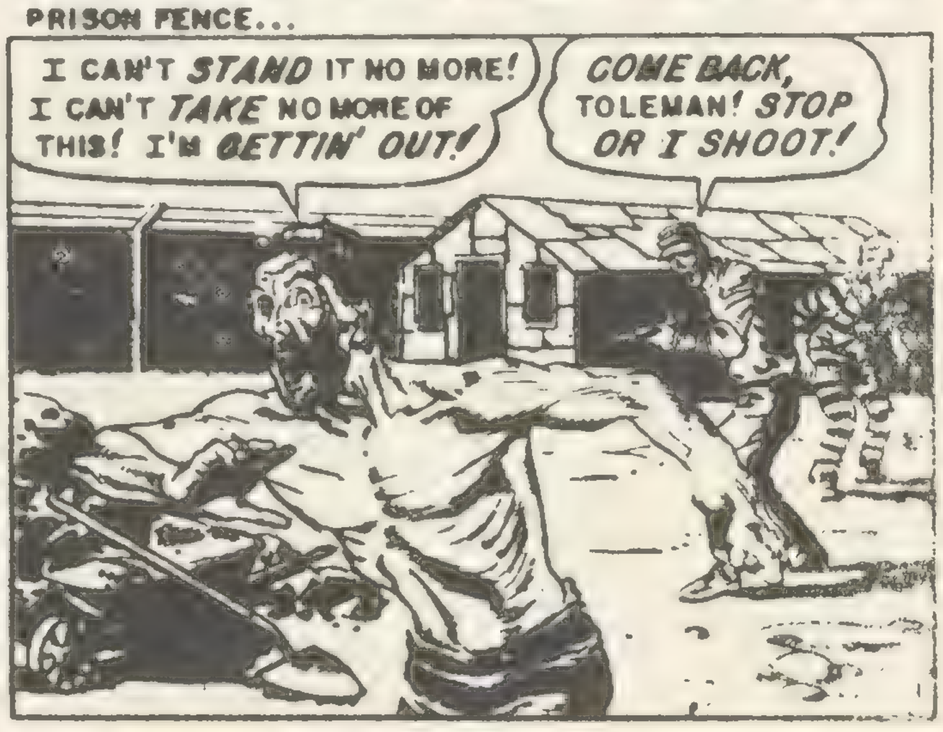
LESTER HOAG RULED OVER HIS PRISON CAMP WITH AN IRON FIST AND A LEATHER WHIP AND A COMPELLING DESIRE TO INFLICT PAIN UPON THE LIFERS WHO WERE HIS CHARGES. AND NO ONE HAD EVER ESCAPED FROM LESTER HOAG'S INTOLERABLE DOMAIN. SOME HAD TRIED, BUT NONE HAD SURVIVED THE FIERCE GANTLET BETWEEN THE COMPOUND'S OUTER AND INNER FENCES WHERE FEROCIOUS SEMI-STARVED DOGS WAITED WITH SALIVA DRIPPING FROM THEIR BLOODTHIRSTY JAWS...WAITED FOR THE DESPERATE ONES...THE ONES WHO WOULD FINALLY BREAK UNDER THE STRAIN OF LESTER HOAG'S CURSES AND SCREAMS AND THE STINGS OF HIS WHIP AND THE BRUISES OF HIS HOBNAILED BOOTS...WAITED FOR THOSE WHO WOULD NO LONGER CARE ...TO WHOM FREEDOM AND DEATH WOULD EVENTUALLY COME TO MEAN ONE AND THE SAME THING...

BIT UP, YOU ORNERY, BACK-SLIDIN' GOLDBRICK! THEM PICKS AN' SHOVELS KEEP WORKIN' TILL *I* CALL A BREAK... NOT WHEN *YOU* FEEL LIKE TAKIN' ONE! BIT UP OR, SO HELP ME, *I'LL LAY YOUR BONES OPEN*, HERRICK!
REED CRANDALL

TOM HERRICK WRITHED BENEATH THE BESTIAL ONSLAUGHT OF LESTER HOAG'S WHISTLING LASH, RECOILING IN PAIN WITH EACH STINGING BLOW THAT TRACED AN ANGRY RED LINE ACROSS HIS PERSPIRED BARED BACK. HIS FELLOW PRISONERS STOOD BY, HELPLESSLY WATCHING, HELPLESSLY SUFFERING WITH HIM...


STOP IT! FOR GOD'S SAKE, *STOP IT! DON'T HIT HIM ANYMORE!*
STAY PUT, TOLEMAN! AIN'T FIVE YEARS IN THIS PLACE TAUGHT YOU NOT TO INTERFERE WITH A CAMP FLOGGING? *GET BACK!*

ANDY TOLEMAN HESITATED, HIS EYES FILLING WITH TEARS, STARING AT THE TWITCHING BODY OF HIS PRISON PAL. THEN, SUDDENLY, HE DARTED TOWARD THE BARBED-WIRE PRISON FENCE...



ONE OF THE GRISLY PRISON GUARDS RAISED HIS RIFLE. HOAG STEPPED FORWARD, GRINNING, PUTTING HIS HUGE FIST UPON THE BARREL...

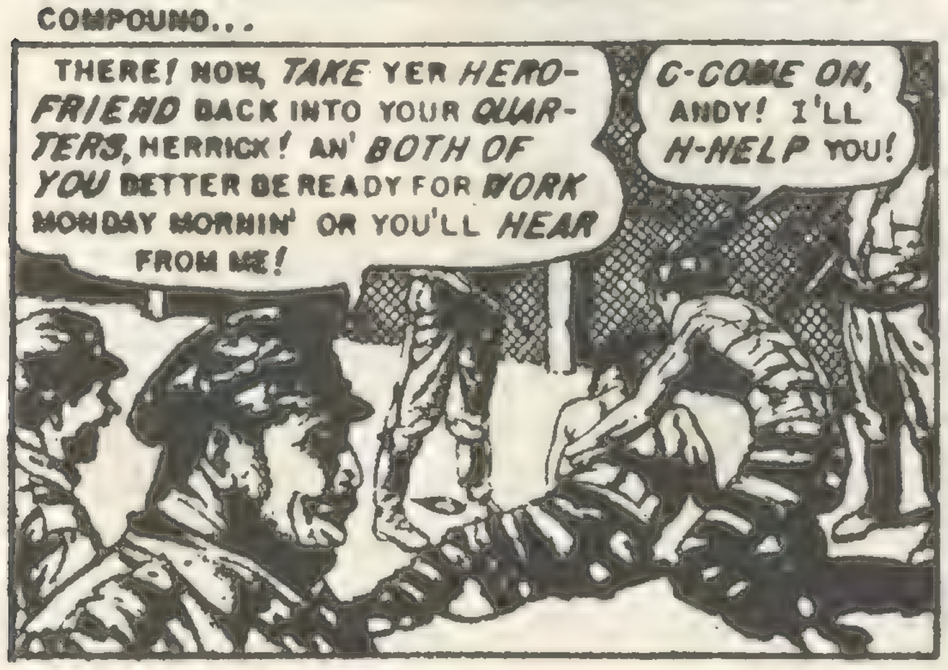
THE BLOODY, BEATEN PRISONER RAISED HIMSELF, CRYING WEAKLY TO HIS FLEEING COMPANION...

THE SNARLING HOUNDS LEAPED DOWN THE NARROW AISLE BETWEEN THE INNER AND OUTER BARBED-WIRE FENCES TO WHERE THE ESCAPING PRISONER STOOD, ROOTED WITH FEAR...

THE PRISON CAMP ECHOED WITH ANDY'S TERRIFIED SCREAMS AND THE BLOOD-INFURIATED HOWLS OF THE HUNGER-CRAZED HOUNDS AS THEY LEAPED UPON THE UNFORTUNATE ESCAPEE... RIPPING... SLASHING.., TEARING...

AND LESTER HOAG WATCHED WITH AN EVIL SATISFACTION AS THE RAZOR SHARP FANGS OF HIS STARVED BEASTS TORE AT THE SHRIEKING PRISONER WHO HAD ATTEMPTED TO DEFY THEIR VIGIL...

SOMEHOW, THE GUARDS MANAGED TO BEAT OFF THE YAPPING HOUNDS AND DRAG THE LACERATED AND BLEEDING BODY OF ANDY TOLEMAN BACK INSIDE THE COMPOUND...

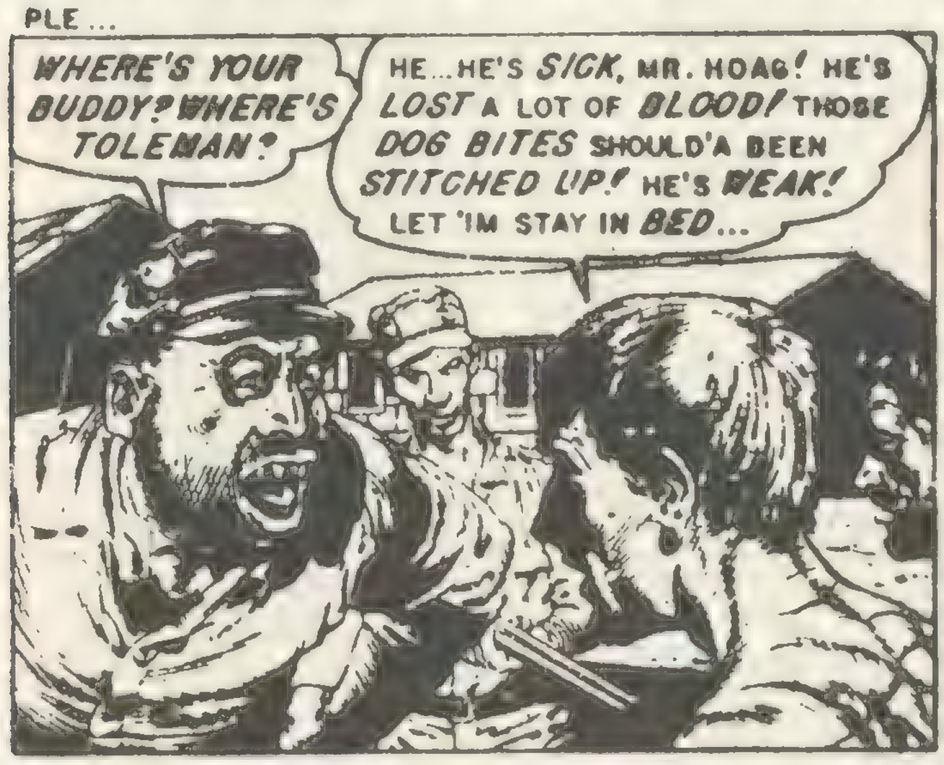

THERE! NOW, TAKE YER HERO-FRIEND BACK INTO YOUR QUARTERS, HERRICK! AN' BOTH OF YOU BETTER BE READY FOR WORK MONDAY MORNIN' OR YOU'LL HEAR FROM ME!
C-COME ON, ANDY! I'LL H-HELP YOU!

THAT NIGHT, BY THE LIGHT OF A FLICKERING CANDLE, TOM HERRICK BATHED ANDY TOLEMAN'S WOUNDS... TOUCHING A DAMPENED CLOTH TO THE UGLY FLOWING GASHES... THE TORN AND LACERATED FLESH OF HIS PRISON-FRIEND...

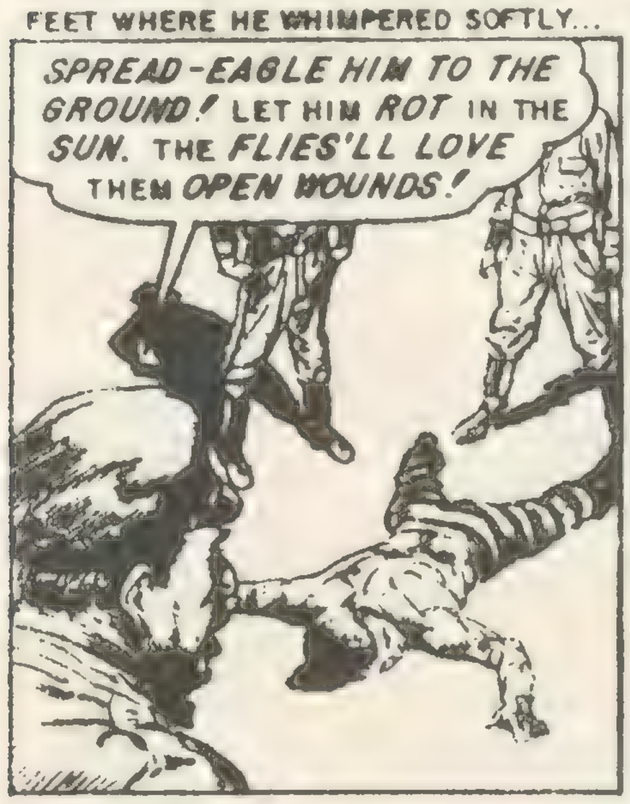
THE NEXT DAY WAS SUNDAY, LESTER HOAG'S DAY OFF. BUT THE TENSE CLOUD OF HATRED THAT LAY LIKE A BLANKET OVER THE CAMP WAS HARDLY DISPERSED. FOR HOAG RELAXED, IN FULL VIEW, IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE A FEW HUNDRED YARDS AWAY DOWN THE VALLEY...

LOOK AT HIM! THE FAT SLOB! LOOK AT HIM LYIN' THERE... DRINKIN' BEER... DROOLIN' OVER GIRLIE MAGAZINES...
HE'S TIRED FROM BEATIN' US ALL WEEK. HE'S GOTTA REST UP... GET HIS STRENGTH BACK... SO'S HE CAN START ALL OVER TOMORROW...

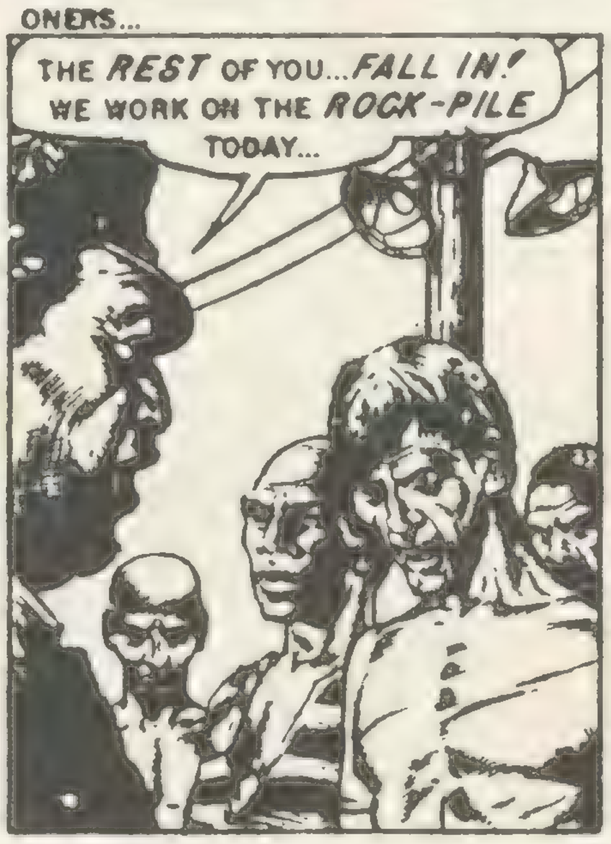
AT SHACKLING TIME THE NEXT MORNING, ANDY WAS MISSING FROM THE LINE-UP. HOAG'S FACE TURNED PURPLE...


WHERE'S YOUR BUDDY? WHERE'S TOLEMAN?
HE...HE'S SICK, MR. HOAG! HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD! THOSE DOG BITES SHOULD'A BEEN STITCHED UP! HE'S WEAK! LET 'IM STAY IN BED...

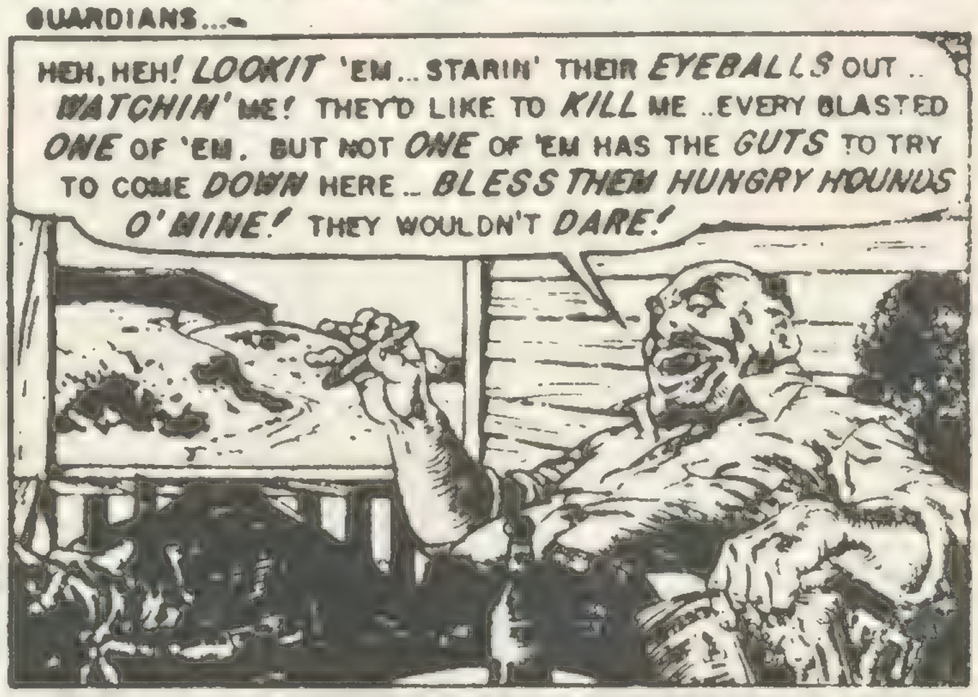
ANDY WAS DRAGGED FROM HIS CRAWLY BED AND FLUNG AT HOAG'S FEET WHERE HE WHIMPERED SOFTLY...



HOAG TURNED TO THE OTHER PRISONERS...

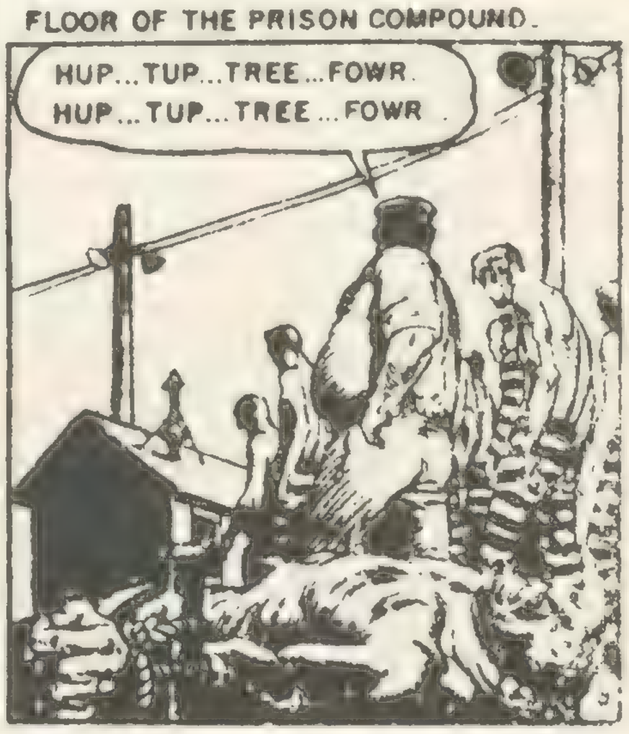


THE PRISON DICTATOR WAS OBLIVIOUS TO THE NAKED FURY MOUNTING IN THE CAMP UP THE HILLSIDE. HE WAS SAFE, AND A PACK OF STARVED, BLOOD-THIRSTY HOUNDS WERE HIS GUARDIANS...


HEH, HEH! LOOKIT 'EM... STARIN' THEIR EYEBALLS OUT.. WATCHIN' ME! THEY'D LIKE TO KILL ME..EVERY BLASTED ONE OF 'EM. BUT NOT ONE OF 'EM HAS THE GUTS TO TRY TO COME DOWN HERE.. BLESS THEM HUNGRY HOUNDS O'MINE! THEY WOULDN'T DARE!

STAY IN BED?! NOBODY STAYS IN BED! IF HE'S ALIVE, HE WORKS! WILSON... WALKER... DRAG THAT TOLEMAN OUT HERE! SICK, IS HE?! WE'LL SEE HOW SICK HE'LL BE WHEN I GET THROUGH WITH HIM...
YES, SIR! C'MON, WILSON!
LET'S GO!

AND AS TOM AND OTHER SICK AND WEAK AND HALF-DEAD PRISONERS MARCHED OFF, ANDY WAS LASHED SPREAD-EAGLED TO THE HOT, DUSTY FLOOR OF THE PRISON COMPOUND.

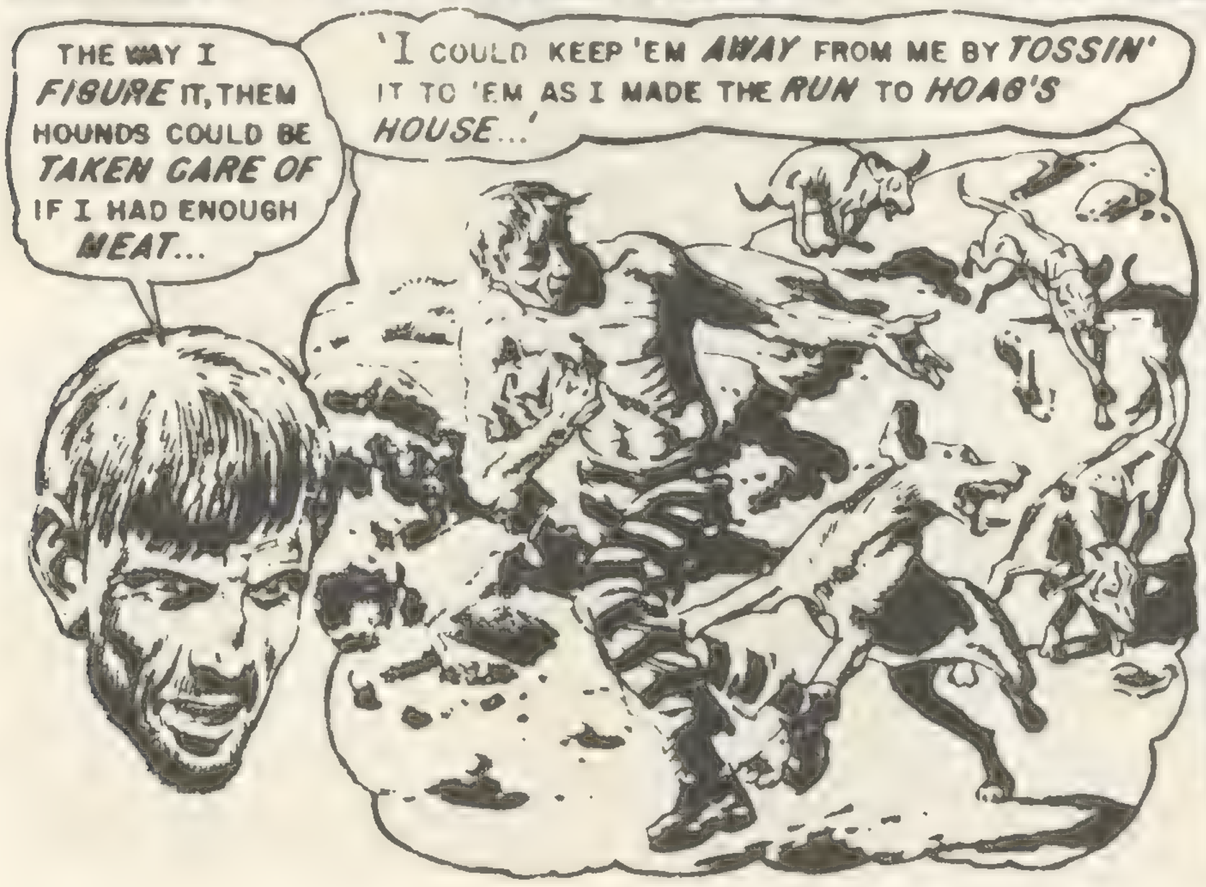


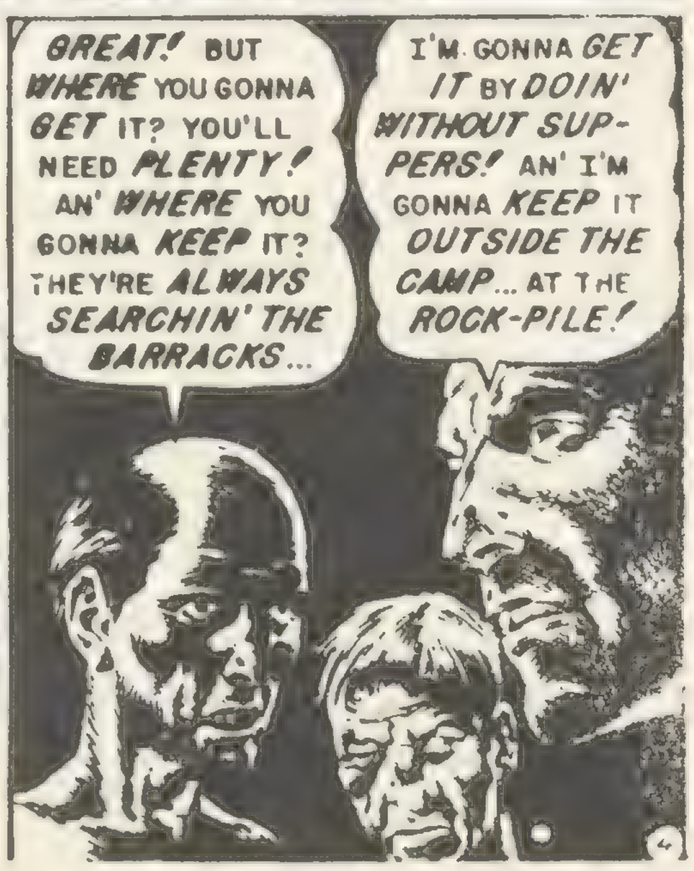
THAT EVENING, WHEN THE MEN RETURNED TO THE COMPOUND, ANDY WAS RELEASED FROM HIS TORTUROUS POSITION. BUT HE DID NOT GET UP...

GO AHEAD! TAKE YOUR GOLD-BRICKIN' FRIEND! MAYBE HE'S LEARNED HIS LESSON! AN' IF HE AIN'T READY TO REPORT FOR WORK T'MORROW... THE SAME THING...
ANDY! ANDY! C'MON! IT'S TOM!

THEY CARRIED ANDY INTO THE PRISON BARRACKS AND LAID HIM ON HIS BLOODSTAINED COT. HE OPENED HIS EYES JUST ONCE... SAID JUST ONE THING BEFORE HE DIED—

TOM HERRICK LOOKED AT THE DEAD BODY OF HIS FRIEND AND A STORM BREWED WITHIN HIM...A STORM THAT CAME UP FROM SOMEWHERE DEEP... RAGING ANGRIER AND ANGRIER—

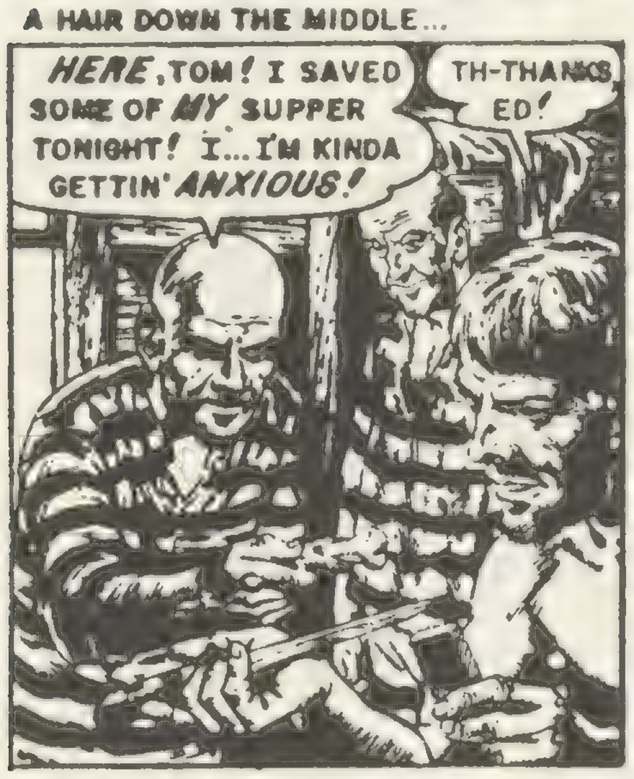

THE WAY I FIGURE IT, THEM HOUNDS COULD BE TAKEN CARE OF IF I HAD ENOUGH MEAT...
'I COULD KEEP 'EM AWAY FROM ME BY TOSSIN' IT TO 'EM AS I MADE THE RUN TO HOAG'S HOUSE...'


GREAT! BUT WHERE YOU GONNA GET IT? YOU'LL NEED PLENTY! AN' WHERE YOU GONNA KEEP IT? THEY'RE ALWAYS SEARCHIN' THE BARRACKS...
I'M GONNA GET IT BY DOIN' WITHOUT SUPPERS! AN' I'M GONNA KEEP IT OUTSIDE THE CAMP... AT THE ROCK-PILE!

AND SO, 'OPERATION REVENGE' BEGAN FOR TOM HERRICK. HE WASN'T INTERESTED IN ESCAPING FROM THE PRISON NOW. THAT COULD COME ALONG LATER AS AN AFTER-THOUGHT IF HIS PLAN WORKED. ONLY ONE THING OCCUPIED TOM'S MIND. *'KILL HOAG...FOR ANDY...'*

LITTLE BY LITTLE, DAY AFTER DAY, WEEK AFTER WEEK, TOM SAVED THE MEAGER SCRAPS OF MEAT FROM HIS SUPPER PLATES, STUFFING THEM INTO A CLOTH BAG HE'D SEWN BENEATH HIS SHIRT. AND ON THE DAYS WHEN THEY'D WORK THE ROCK PILE, HE'D ADD HIS SAVINGS TO THE REST OF HIS CACHE...

DURING THE LONG NIGHTS, HE'D HONE AND REHONE THE ONCE-DULL MESS KNIFE TILL IT COULD ALMOST SPLIT A HAIR DOWN THE MIDDLE...



SOON, 'OPERATION REVENGE' WASN'T ONLY TOM'S BATTLE. EVERY-ONE IN THE CAMP HAD A STAKE IN IT...

AND THE CACHE GREW...

FROM HIS VANTAGE POINT WITH THE SUN BEHIND HIM, LESTER HOAG WATCHED THE PRISONERS' FURTIVE OPER-ATIONS...

WHEN THE PRISONERS WERE RETURNED, THE WORD WAS PASSED ALONG...

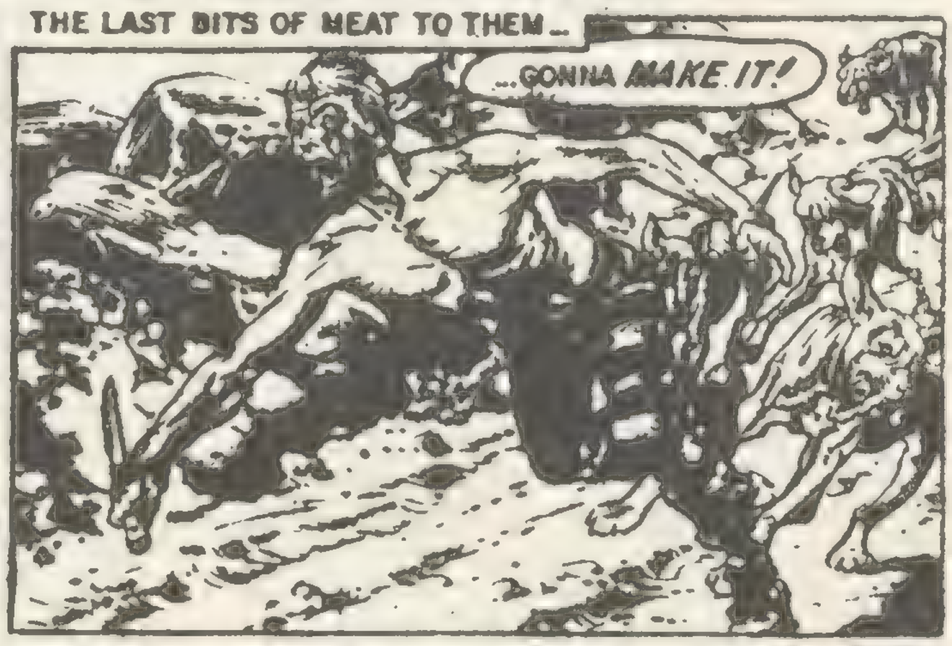
SAVE *ALL* YER MEAT!
SAVE *ALL YOU GET! HERRICK GOES TONIGHT!*
HE'LL NEED ENOUGH TO GET *PAST* THE *GANTLET* TILL HE CAN REACH THE *BIG CATCH* AT THE *ROCK PILE!*

A GHOSTLY COLD MOON HUNG IN A VELVET BLACK SKY AS TOM SLIPPED FROM THE PRISON BARRACKS OUT INTO THE DESERTED COMPOUND. . .

HE RAN LOW, HIDING THE GLINT OF HIS KNIFE. FROM THE GAUNTLET CAME THE SLOBBERING BARKING OF THE STARVED HOUNDS. BEHIND, SOMEONE SHOUTED AND A BARRACKS WINDOW SMASHED...

THE DOGS LOPED TOWARD HIM, HOWLING. HE FLUNG SOME OF THE PRECIOUS MEAT AND THEY LEAPED UPON IT, SNARLING AND FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES...

THE DOGS WERE AFTER HIM AS HE FLUNG OPEN THE OUTER GATE AND DARTED DOWN THE ROAD TOWARD THE ROCK PILE. ICE COLD SWEAT RAN DOWN HIS BACK. HIS HEART POUNDED WILDLY IN HIS HEAVING CHEST. HE FLUNG THE LAST BITS OF MEAT TO THEM...



...AND CLAWED AT HIS MEAT CACHE'S HIDING PLACE..

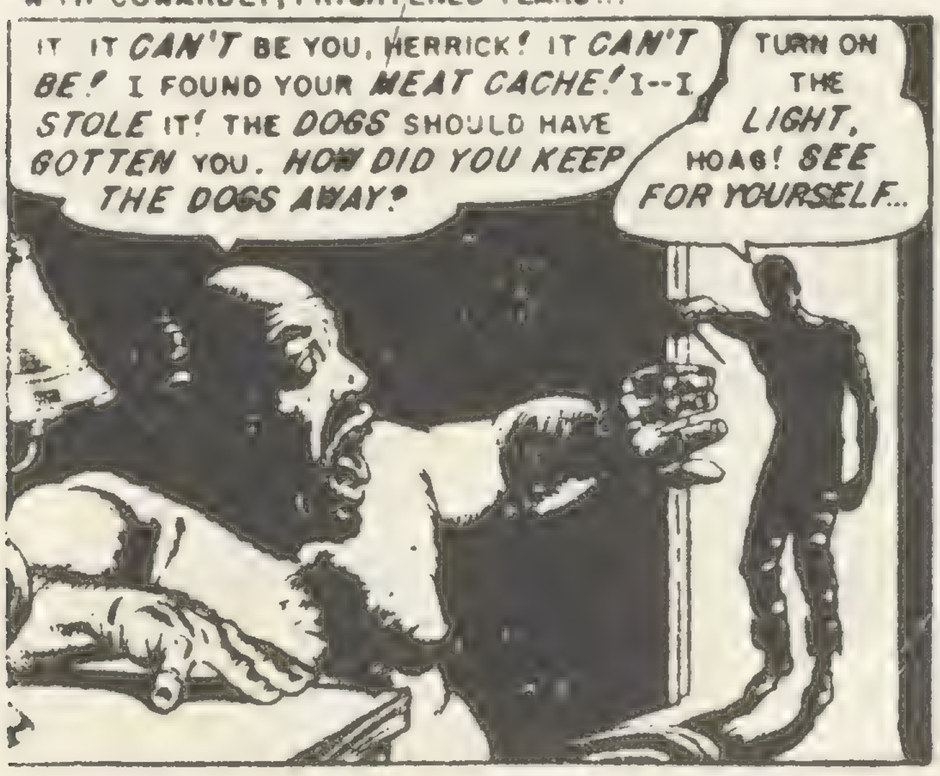
SAFE IN HIS SOFT BED IN HIS VALLEY HOUSE FAR BELOW, LESTER HOAG SAT UP, LISTENING TO THE HOWLING DOGS. AND HE LAUGHED...

AT THE ROCK PILE, TOM HERRICK DISCOVERED *WHY!* THE *MEAT WAS*...

HOAG LEANED BACK IN HIS BED, LIT HIS CIGAR, AND PUFFED ON IT CONTENTEDLY. HE *KNEW* WHAT WAS *HAPPENING!* HE COULD *SEE* IT IN HIS *MIND'S EYE*. HE'D *FIGURED THE WHOLE THING OUT!* AFTER THE PRISONERS HAD BEEN MARCHED BACK, HE'D *FOUND* THE CACHE OF MEAT AND *REMOVED IT*...

HOAG PEERED THROUGH HIS BEDROOM WINDOW, FLIPPING OFF THE LIGHT SO HE COULD SEE INTO THE MOONLIT DARKNESS. THE HOWLS OF THE DOGS WERE CLOSER NOW. BUT SUDDENLY THERE WAS ANOTHER SOUND... A MORE FRIGHTENING SOUND ..THE SOUND OF A DOOR SLAMMING...

TOM HERRICK STOOD SILHOUETTED IN THE BEDROOM DOORWAY. HOAG BACKED UP... HIS FLABBY FACE TWITCHING IN FEAR... HIS THICK LIPS SUDDENLY DRY... HIS EYES FILLING WITH COWARDLY, FRIGHTENED TEARS...


IT IT *CAN'T* BE YOU, HERRICK! IT *CAN'T BE!* I FOUND YOUR *MEAT CACHE!* I--I *STOLE* IT! THE *DOGS* SHOULD HAVE *GOTTEN* YOU. *HOW DID YOU KEEP THE DOGS AWAY?*
TURN ON THE *LIGHT*, HOAG! *SEE FOR YOURSELF...*

HOAG WAITED FOR THE EAR-SPLITTING SCREAMS... THE GURGLING DEATH CRY! BUT NO CRIES CAME! ONLY THE HOWLING SNARLING YELPS OF THE STARVED DOGS DRIFTED TO HIM... DRAWING NEARER... NEARER...

HE HEARD THE FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS, HEARD THE HEAVY BREATHING IN THE HALL OUTSIDE, SAW THE GLINT OF THE STEEL KNIFE THAT HAD BEEN PATIENTLY HONED AND HONED AND HONED...

HOAG REACHED OUT WITH A TREMBLING HAND AND FLICKED ON THE BEDROOM LIGHT. SUDDENLY HE WAS SICK. THE KNIFE IN HERRICK'S HAND WOULD BE A WELCOME END TO THE REVOLTING HORROR THAT ROILED AND TURNED HIS STOMACH IN DISGUST...

AND AS HERRICK CAME TOWARD HIM, HOAG TURNED FROM THE AWFUL SIGHT OF WHITE BONE SHOWING THROUGH RAW RED FLESH WHERE HERRICK HAD STRIPPED MEAT TO FEED THE HOWLING HUNGRY HOUNDS...

-THE END-

FIRED!

PATRICIA GIBSON, OWNER OF THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND, OPENED THE DOOR OF THE RANCH HOUSE IN ANSWER TO THE HEAVY KNOCK. ROY WILLIS, ONE OF THE HIRED HANDS, STOOD OUTSIDE ON THE PORCH, HAT IN HAND...

WHY, *ROY!* WHY AREN'T YOU OUT ON THE RANGE WITH THE *BOYS?*

I WANTED TO *SPEAK* TO YOU, MA'AM! MAY I... COME IN!

AL WILLIAMSON & FRITZ

HE WAS TALL AND BROAD-SHOULDERED, AND HIS WINDSWEPT BLACK HAIR FELL IN A CURLED SHOCK OVER HIS PERSPIRING BROW. HE AMBLED TOWARD PATRICIA, HIS EYES TRAVELING OVER HER...

PATRICIA LOOKED AWAY. SHE STEPPED ASIDE, ALLOWING ROY TO PASS HER...

OF *COURSE*, ROY! COME IN! WHAT *IS* IT?

I BEEN MEANIN' TO *SPEAK* TO YOU FOR *SOME TIME*, MA'AM! THIS *MORNIN'*, WHEN I NOTICED YOU *LOOKIN'* AT ME, I MADE UP MY MIND THAT IT WAS *TIME!*

I DIDN'T *MEAN* TO STARE AT YOU LIKE THAT, ROY! I'M *SORRY*...

I'M NOT, MA'AM! I WAS *HOPING*... WELL.. THAT I WASN'T *MISTAKEN* ABOUT WHAT I *SAW* IN YOUR EYES, THIS MORNIN'!

HE STOOD OVER HER. SHE TURNED TO HIM...

WHAT DO YOU *THINK* YOU SAW, ROY?

I.. I *THOUGHT* IT WAS THE LOOK OF A WOMAN WHO *WANTED* A MAN *REAL BAD*, MA'AM! *THIS* MAN...

SHE STARED AT THE FLOOR, HER FACE FLUSHING. ROY MOVED CLOSER...

THAT'S A RATHER *BRAZEN THOUGHT*, ROY!

TELL ME IT *ISN'T TRUE*, AND I'LL *GO*, MA'AM!

HIS BIG HANDS WERE ON HER ARMS NOW. HE HELD HER, LOOKING INTO HER EYES...

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU IT *WERE* TRUE, ROY? THAT I'VE LOOKED AT YOU *EVERY DAY* SINCE YOU *CAME* TO THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND_ AND *WANTED YOU!* WHAT WOULD IT *MEAN* TO YOU?

PAT! WE'VE BEEN SUCH *FOOLS!* WE'VE WASTED SO MUCH *TIME!*

AND NOW HIS ARMS WERE AROUND HER, PULLING HER TOWARD HIM...

ROY! DARLING.

PAT...

OUTSIDE THE RANCH HOUSE, ROY'S HORSE WHINNIED AND PAWED THE GROUND. FAR AWAY, A CALF'S CRY OF PAIN DRIFTED ACROSS THE STILL AIR. IN THE RANCH HOUSE, ROY STOOD UP. PAT LOOKED UP AT HIM FROM THE SOFA...

I GOTTA *GO*, PAT! THE BOYS ARE *WAITIN'* ON ME OUT THERE! THEY GOT SOME *CALVES* TIED AND READY FOR BRANDIN'!

DON'T GO, ROY! THE BOYS CAN *WAIT*. STAY *HERE* FOR AWHILE...

ROY SHOOK HIS HEAD...

CAN'T, PAT! IT AIN'T *FAIR!* NOW, IF I WERE *FOREMAN* HERE... *RUNNIN'* THE SHOW... I COULD DO AS I *PLEASE!* I COULD *STAY* IF I *WANTED* TO!

IS *THAT* WHAT YOU WANT, ROY? TO BE *FOREMAN* OF THE *CIRCLE-DIAMOND?*

ROY NODDED AND SAT DOWN. PAT PUT HER CHEEK AGAINST HIS LIPS...

IF IT'LL MAKE YOU *HAPPY*, ROY, THE JOB IS *YOURS!* ALL *I* ASK IS... YOU KEEP *ME* HAPPY... IN *RETURN!*

IT'LL BE A *PLEASURE*, PAT! A *REAL PLEASURE*...

THE SUMMER WANED AND ROUND-UP TIME CAME TO THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND. THE STEERS WERE HERDED AND DRIVEN FROM THE GRAZING LANDS TO THE CORRALS...

THAT DOGGIE'S *STRAYIN'*, TIM!

I'LL BRING 'ER IN LINE, ROY!

THE CATTLE DESTINED FOR THE SLAUGHTER HOUSES WERE SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THE HERD AND DRIVEN EASTWARD. THE YOUNG CALVES BORN OUT ON THE RANGE WERE BRANDED...

MISS *PAT* WANTS TO SEE YOU, ROY!

OKAY, TIM! HELP THE *BOYS*, HERE, HUH!

HOLD 'IM, NED!

AND THEN WINTER MOVED IN.. BLEAK AND COLD. AROUND THE POT-BELLIED STOVE IN THE BUNKHOUSE, THE HANDS WOULD GATHER EACH EVENING...

LOOK! THERE GOES *ROY*.. CUTTIN' CROSS THE YARD TO TH' HOUSE.

FOREMAN! BAH! JUS' 'CAUSE HE'S GOT *BIG BROAD SHOULDERS* AND A *HANDSOME FACE*...

HOLD YER *TONGUE!* IF'N HE *HEARS* YUH, YOU'LL BE LOOKIN' FOR *ANOTHER JOB!*

AND ALL THROUGH THE LONG WINTER...

NICE HERE BY THE FIRE, HUH, ROY?

YEAH! COZY...

BUT LONG WINTERS MEAN MORE THAN JUST COLD WEATHER. LONG WINTERS MEAN BOREDOM.

WHERE YOU *GOIN'*, ROY?

INTO *TOWN!* ANY *OBJECTIONS?*

N-NO! YOU CAN GO INTO TOWN WHENEVER YOU WANT! ANYTHING *WRONG?*

JUST WANT A *CHANGE OF SCENE*, THAT'S ALL! I'M TAKIN' THE *CAR!*

ALL RIGHT, ROY! I'LL ... *WAIT UP* FOR YOU!

DON'T *BOTHER!*

ROY SPED OFF AND PAT WATCHED THE YELLOW CLOUD OF DUST DISAPPEAR INTO THE GATHERING TWILIGHT, HER EYES FILLING WITH TEARS. THAT NIGHT... IN TOWN...

SHE WAS PAINTED AND CHEAP-LOOKING... THE TYPE THAT COULD RELIEVE BOREDOM...

MY NAME'S AMY... AMY RYAN! I SING HERE. WHAT'S YOURS, COW-BOY?
ROY WILLIS, MA'AM! I'M FOREMAN AT THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND! I HEARD YOU SING! YOU GOT A NICE VOICE!

IT WAS EARLY IN THE MORNING WHEN ROY DROVE BACK TO THE RANCH. PATRICIA WATCHED FROM HER BEDROOM WINDOW AS HE CROSSED THE YARD TO THE BUNKHOUSE...

ROY'S TRIPS TO TOWN THAT WINTER BECAME MORE AND MORE FREQUENT. HE SAW LESS AND LESS OF PAT...

AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH AMY BECAME WARMER AND WARMER...

AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, IN A ROOM OVER THE SALOON WHERE AMY WORKED...

ROY, HONEY! *WHEN* ARE WE GONN' T'GET *MARRIED*? YOU BEEN PROMISIN'!

SOON, BABY! *SOON*...

SO...

IT WAS PAT. SHE'D FOLLOWED ROY TO TOWN. SHE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY, HER EYES BLAZING...

SO *THIS* IS HOW YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING YOUR NIGHTS IN TOWN!

PAT! YOU GOT A *NERVE* BUSTIN' IN HERE LIKE THIS! *GET OUT!*

WHO'S *SHE*, ROY?

PATRICIA GIBSON'S MY NAME, HONEY. DIDN'T ROY *TELL* YOU ABOUT ME?

GET *OUT*, PAT! I'LL *SEE* YOU WHEN I GET BACK TO THE *RANCH!*

WHAT *ABOUT* HER, ROY?

TELL HER, ROY! TELL HER ABOUT *US!*

I SAID *GET OUT*, PAT!

I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU *HAD NO TIES*, ROY!

HAH! *THAT'S* A LAUGH! HE'S *ALL MINE*, HONEY... AND NOBODY'S TAKIN' HIM *AWAY* FROM ME...

SHE'S *CRAZY*, AMY!

YOU'D BETTER LEAVE, AND YOU CAN TAKE *HIM* WITH YOU!

AMY SLAMMED THE DOOR. ROY AND PAT STOOD OUTSIDE IN THE HALL SHADOWS...

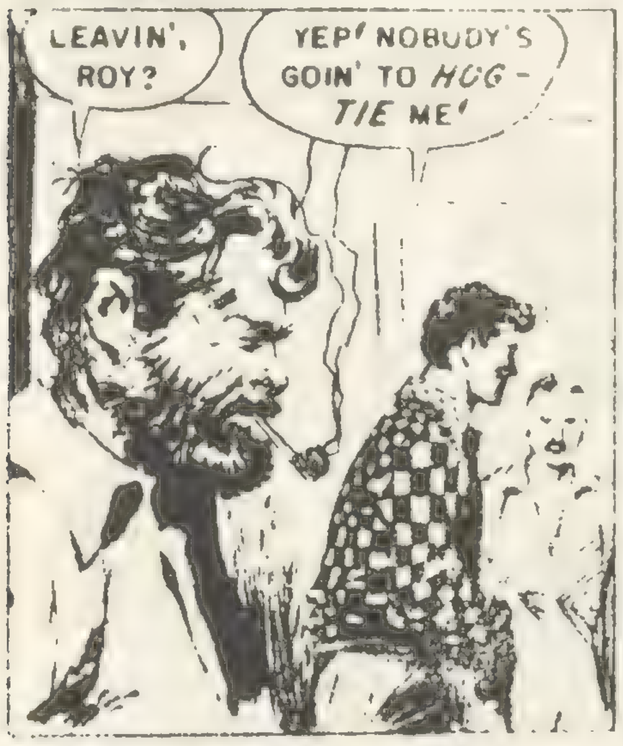
THAT WASN'T *NICE* OF YOU, ROY.. TELLING AMY YOU HAD *NO TIES*...

I *DON'T!* I *STILL* DON'T!

I DON'T BELONG TO *ANYBODY*, PAT! NEITHER *YOU*... *NOR AMY!* I *TAKE* WHAT I *GET!* IT'S A *BIG RANGE* AND I *GRAZE* WHERE THE *GRASS IS GREENEST!* *NOW* I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR ME TO *GIT MOVIN'!* I'LL GO BACK TO THE *RANCH* WITH YOU AND GET MY *THINGS*...

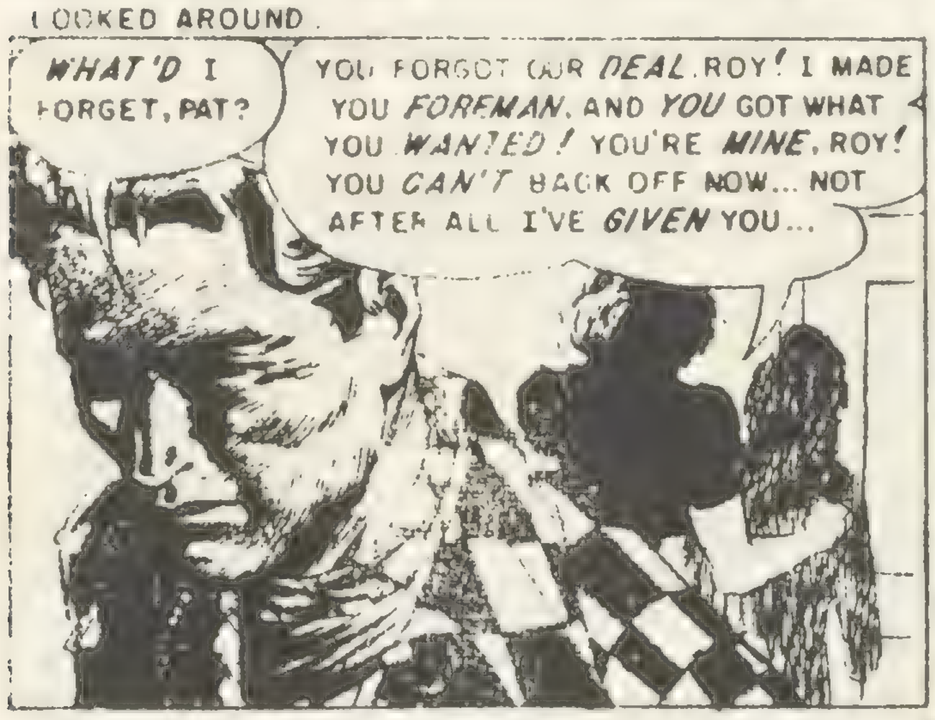
ALL RIGHT, ROY! LET'S GO..

THE BOYS IN THE BUNK HOUSE WATCHED ROY AS HE PACKED HIS CLOTHES...



PAT CALLED TO HIM FROM THE RANCH HOUSE AS HE WALKED PAST...

ROY CAME INTO THE RANCH HOUSE. PAT CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM AND SILENTLY LOCKED IT AS ROY LOOKED AROUND.


WHAT'D I FORGET, PAT?
YOU FORGOT OUR *DEAL*, ROY! I MADE YOU *FOREMAN*, AND *YOU* GOT WHAT YOU *WANTED!* YOU'RE *MINE*, ROY! YOU *CAN'T* BACK OFF NOW... NOT AFTER ALL I'VE *GIVEN* YOU...

THE BLAZE IN THE FIREPLACE BURNED BRISKLY...

OH, *NO*, PAT! *YOU* GOT NO *HOLD* ON *ME!* WE'RE *NOT MARRIED! REMEMBER?* I CAN PULL OUT *ANYTIME!* THERE'S *NOTHIN'* SAYS I'M *YOURS!* NOTHIN'...
OH, *YES* THERE *IS*, ROY!

PAT DARTED TO THE FIREPLACE, SNATCHING THE BLACK HANDLE FROM THE FLAMES. THE DESIGN GLOWED WHITE-HOT...

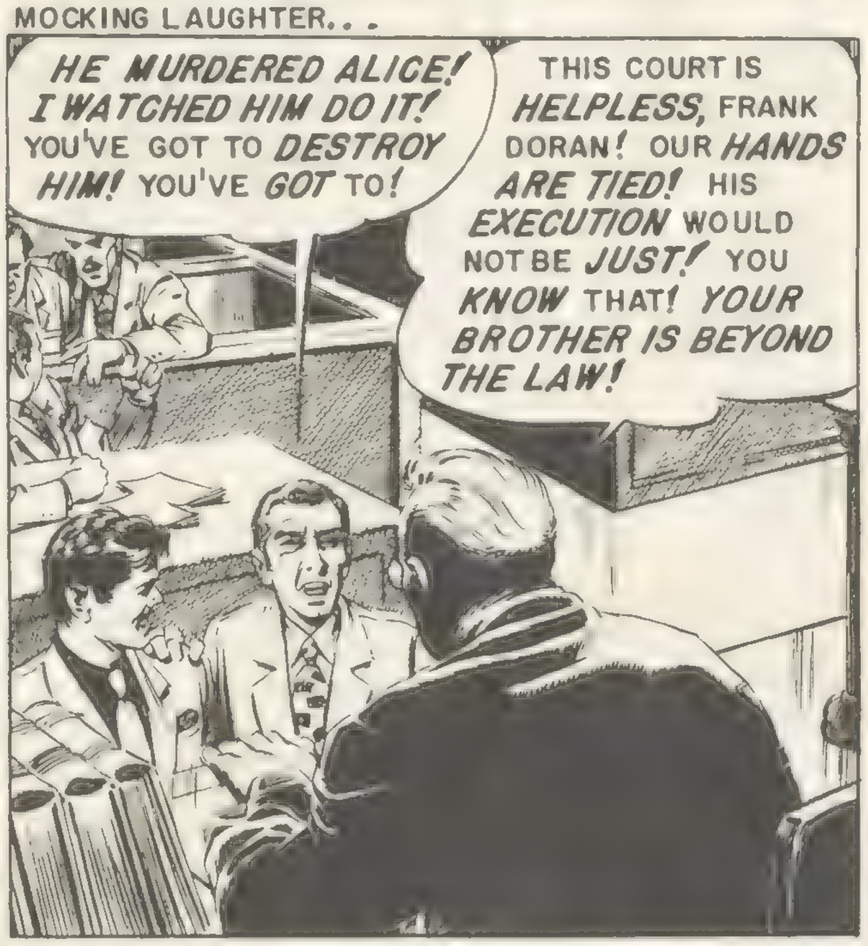
WHEN THE BUNK HOUSE BOYS FINALLY BROKE INTO THE RANCH HOUSE, THEY FOUND PATRICIA GIBSON SOBBING HYSTERICALLY, THE COOLING IRON IN HER HANDS! AND ON ROY'S FACE WAS THE BLISTERED AND CHARRED RESULTS OF HER WORK...

...MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A LITTLE WHILE AGO, I STOOD BESIDE MY BROTHER MARK IN THE MUSTY ANCIENT CHAMBER OF THE STATE SUPREME COURT, WHILE A HUNDRED CURIOUS RESENTFUL ANGRY ONLOOKERS STARED AT US. I FELT FLUSHED WITH SHAME, BUT MARK JUST LOOKED BACK AT THEM DEFIANTLY, SNEERINGLY, RETURNING STARE FOR STARE. A MENACING DRONE HOVERED IN THE COURTROOM, STILLED FINALLY BY THE RAPPING GAVEL OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE. AND MARK REPEATED HIS LOATHSOME CONFESSION... LAUGHED OUT HIS HORRIBLE ADMISSION... TAUNTING THE COURT AND THE SPECTATORS AND ME...

YES, I KILLED HER! I CHOKED HER WITH THESE TWO STRONG HANDS TILL HER FACE TURNED BLUE... TILL HER EYES BULGED FROM THEIR SOCKETS... TILL... BUT I TOLD YOU ALL THAT. YES, I DESERVE TO DIE. I WANT YOU TO EXECUTE ME. I DARE YOU.
WE... WE CAN'T EXECUTE YOU. IN ALL JUSTICE WE... WE CAN'T! OH, LORD... WE ARE FORCED TO LET THIS MONSTER GO FREE!
GEORGE EVANS

MY OWN VOICE SOUNDED SHRILL IN MY EARS AS I SHRIEKED TO MAKE MYSELF HEARD ABOVE MARK'S MOCKING LAUGHTER...

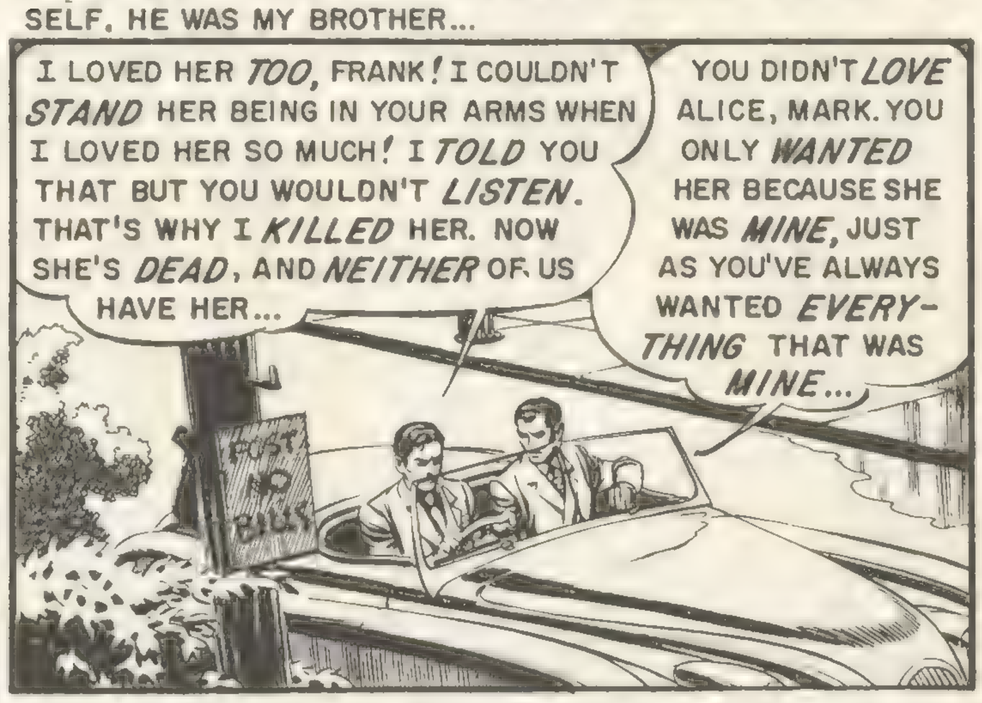

HE MURDERED ALICE! I WATCHED HIM DO IT! YOU'VE GOT TO DESTROY HIM! YOU'VE GOT TO!
THIS COURT IS HELPLESS, FRANK DORAN! OUR HANDS ARE TIED! HIS EXECUTION WOULD NOT BE JUST! YOU KNOW THAT! YOUR BROTHER IS BEYOND THE LAW!

SO, ALTHOUGH THREE JURIES HAD FOUND MY BROTHER GUILTY OF MURDER IN THE FIRST DEGREE, MARK DORAN WAS ABLE TO WALK OUT OF THAT COURT OF LAST RESORT AS A FREE MAN, PROTECTED FROM THE SNARLING SPECTATORS BY A GUARD FLANKING HIM ON ONE SIDE... ME ON THE OTHER...

THE GUARD ACCOMPANIED MARK AND ME TO OUR WAITING CAR AND WATCHED US DRIVE OFF, SHAKING HIS HEAD. ALL THE WAY HOME, I COULD FEEL MARK LOOKING AT ME WITH THAT HEARTLESS SNEER...

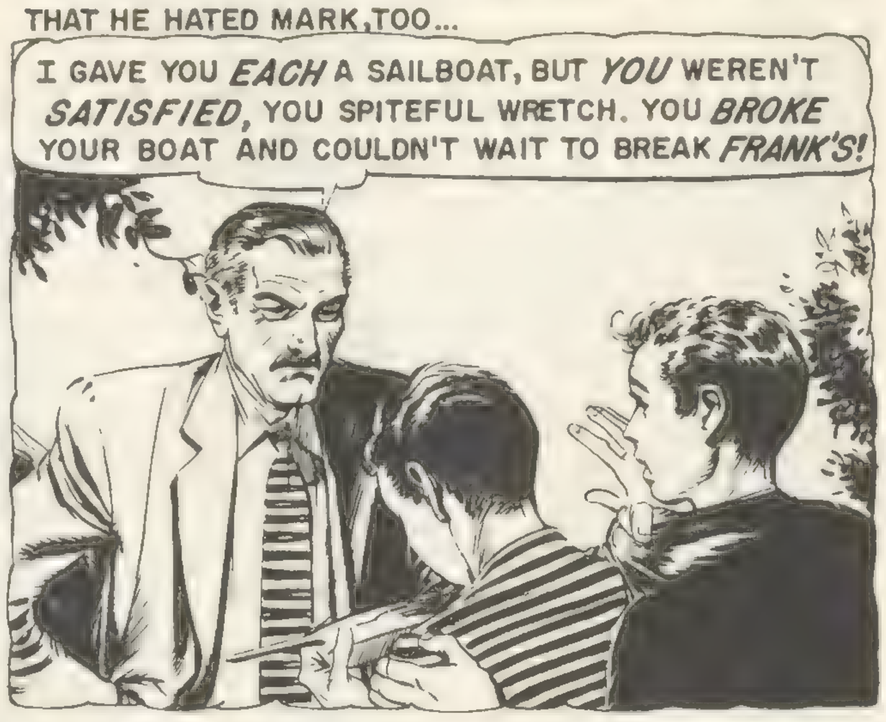
ALICE *LOVED YOU* AND *DESPISED ME*. IT'S *ALWAYS* BEEN THAT WAY. *EVERYONE* LOVED YOU AND DESPISED ME. I NEVER REALLY *CARED* ABOUT IT TILL WE MET *ALICE*...
YOU'VE *NEVER* BEEN ANY GOOD, MARK! YOUR MIND HAS *ALWAYS* BEEN *WARPED*...*EVIL!* *THAT'S* WHY YOU'RE *HATED!*

YES, I HATED MARK. I HATED HIM WITH ALL MY HEART. AND YET I HAD TO STAY WITH HIM. I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF. HE WAS MY BROTHER...


I LOVED HER *TOO*, FRANK! I COULDN'T *STAND* HER BEING IN YOUR ARMS WHEN I LOVED HER SO MUCH! I *TOLD* YOU THAT BUT YOU WOULDN'T *LISTEN*. THAT'S WHY I *KILLED* HER. NOW SHE'S *DEAD*, AND *NEITHER* OF US HAVE HER...
YOU DIDN'T *LOVE* ALICE, MARK. YOU ONLY *WANTED* HER BECAUSE SHE WAS *MINE*, JUST AS YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED *EVERYTHING* THAT WAS *MINE*...

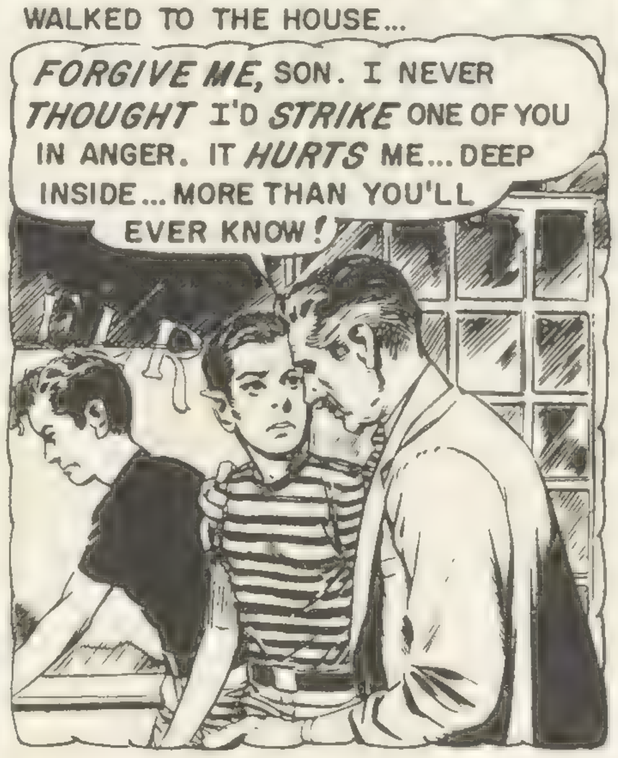
IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY WITH MARK AND ME...EVER SINCE WE WERE CHILDREN. THERE WAS THAT TIME WHEN HE TRIED TO TAKE MY SAILBOAT FROM ME. I'D FOUGHT TO KEEP IT, AND OUR FATHER CAME RUNNING...

MARK HAD DELIBERATELY SMASHED THE BOAT. I'D LOOKED AT FATHER THEN, AND SUDDENLY REALIZED THAT HE HATED MARK, TOO...


I GAVE YOU *EACH* A SAILBOAT, BUT *YOU* WEREN'T *SATISFIED*, YOU SPITEFUL WRETCH. YOU *BROKE* YOUR BOAT AND COULDN'T WAIT TO BREAK *FRANK'S!*

MARK'S INSOLENT SCOWL HAD INFURIATED FATHER. HE'D FLOWN INTO A BLIND RAGE. HE'D SLAPPED MARK AND CALLED HIM NAMES, BUT MARK HAD ONLY GLOWERED DARKLY AT HIM. MARK WOULDN'T GIVE FATHER THE SATISFACTION OF SEEING HIM CRY...

I'D WEPT FOR FRANK...FOR THE BEATING FATHER HAD GIVEN HIM. AND FATHER HAD COMFORTED ME... PUT HIS ARM AROUND MY SHOULDER. AND TEARS HAD FILLED HIS EYES AS WE WALKED TO THE HOUSE...



WHEN WE'D REACHED THE HOUSE, FATHER'D STOPPED US. HE'D LOOKED AT ME WITH A TROUBLED FAR-AWAY EXPRESSION...

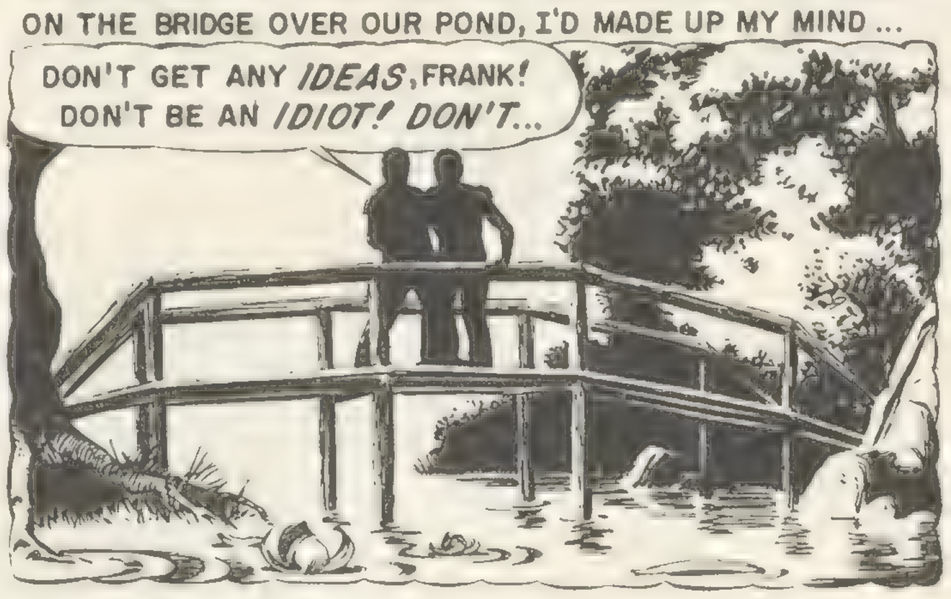
I HADN'T QUITE UNDERSTOOD WHAT FATHER'D MEANT...NOT UNTIL DINNERTIME. MOTHER'D CALLED HIM TO THE TABLE BUT HE'D NOT ANSWERED...

I'D KNOCKED ON FATHER'S DOOR AND, RECEIVING NO ANSWER, HAD OPENED IT, ONLY TO FREEZE IN HORROR AT THE SIGHT THAT GREETED ME. MY FATHER...HANGING FROM THE CHANDELIER...A *SUICIDE*...

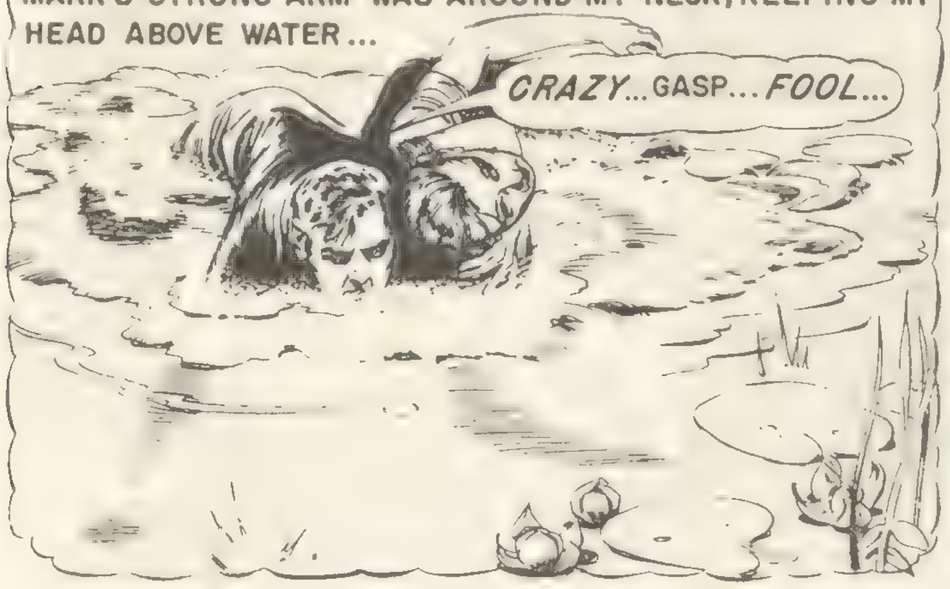
MY HEAD HAD SPUN AND I'D HAVE FAINTED BUT FOR THE CHUCKLING MIRTH-FILLED VOICE AT MY SIDE. ALL AT ONCE I KNEW FATHER HAD TAKEN HIS LIFE BECAUSE OF MARK... *AND MARK WAS GLAD...*

MOTHER'D COME ON THE RUN AT MARK'S OUTCRY. SHE'D ALWAYS DOTED ON MARK. SHE LOOKED AT FATHER HANGING THERE...TURNED TO ME...AND SCREAMED...

I'D CRIED FOR FATHER. AND I'D MISSED HIM SO MUCH, I COULD FINALLY NO LONGER STAND THE GNAWING ACHE OF NOT HAVING HIM NEAR ME. I'D YEARNED TO BE WITH HIM, EVEN IN DEATH. THEN, ONE DAY, AS MARK AND I WALKED ON THE BRIDGE OVER OUR POND, I'D MADE UP MY MIND ...



I'D HURLED MYSELF OVER THE RAIL INTO THE DEEP GREEN WATER, WANTING TO DIE... WANTING TO BE DEAD RATHER THAN LIVE IN THE SAME WORLD WITH MY BROTHER, ...WITHOUT MY FATHER. BUT BEFORE I COULD SINK, MARK'S STRONG ARM WAS AROUND MY NECK, KEEPING MY HEAD ABOVE WATER...



MARK HAD PULLED ME TO SHORE, AND I'D SAT SHAKEN AND SICK, HATING HIM FOR HAVING CHEATED ME INTO LIVING ON...

GRADUALLY, I'D GOTTEN OVER THE GRIEF OF MY FATHER'S DEATH, BUT I'D GROWN TO HATE MARK EACH DAY, JUST AS HIS CRUELTY HAD GROWN. I RECALL ONE AUTUMN DAY, AS WE WERE BURNING LEAVES IN THE INCINERATOR OUT BACK. MOM'S PERSIAN CAT HAD COME UP TO MARK, PURRING AND RUBBING AGAINST HIS LEG...

BEFORE I COULD STOP HIM, HE'D THROWN THE CAT INTO THE LEAPING FLAMES. MOTHER CAME RUNNING AT THE SOUND OF THE POOR ANIMAL'S SHRIEKS OF PAIN...

I NEVER BELIEVED THIS OF YOU, MARK! BUT THIS TIME, I SAW! YOUR FATHER WAS RIGHT! YOU ARE NO GOOD! YOU'RE MEAN... BRUTALLY MEAN! OH, WHY WAS I CURSED WITH A SON LIKE YOU!

AS TIME WENT ON, MOTHER HAD COME TO HATE MARK AS I DID, ALTHOUGH SHE'D NEVER ADMITTED IT. ONE NIGHT, AS WE WERE DRIVING GLORIA MILGRIM HOME FROM A PARTY...

MARK! FOR PETE'S SAKE! YOU'VE GOT NO RIGHT TO SUGGEST ANYTHING LIKE THAT TO A DECENT GIRL!
IT'S OKAY FOR OTHER GUYS, HUH?... BUT I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH! GET OUT! GET OUT OF MY CAR...
OWWWWWW!

GLORIA'D TUMBLED FROM THE CAR, STUNNED AND BLEEDING FROM HER MOUTH WHERE MARK HAD STRUCK HER FURIOUSLY...

AND THE NEXT DAY, A POLICEMAN HAD COME TO OUR HOUSE AND ARRESTED MARK. BUT THERE'D BEEN NO REASON FOR ME TO TESTIFY AGAINST MARK! HE READILY ADMITTED HIS GUILT...

SURE I HIT HER! I'D DO IT AGAIN IF I HAD THE CHANCE! GO ON! BOOK ME! THROW ME IN JAIL!
YOU'VE RUINED THIS GIRL'S FACE, MARK! YOU'VE KNOCKED OUT SEVERAL OF HER TEETH! I OUGHT TO THROW YOU IN JAIL!

BUT HOW CAN I? YOUR SON SHOULD BE CAGED UP LIKE AN ANIMAL, MRS. DORAN. BUT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO... NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO! I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU... AND FRANK...

I'LL PAY FOR WHAT MARK DID! I'LL GO ON PAYING TILL THE DAY I DIE!

"...TILL THE DAY I DIE," SHE SAID. IT WAS LESS THAN A WEEK LATER THAT I'D AWAKENED FROM A TROUBLED SLEEP, FEELING NAUSEOUS AND PARTIALLY PARALYZED...

WE'D RUN TO THE KITCHEN. MOTHER WAS THERE, SLUMPED OVER THE KITCHEN STOVE...

MOTHER'D LEFT A NOTE FOR ME...

"...I HAVE LIVED TO SEE YOUR BROTHER MARK GROW INTO THE VILE CREATURE YOUR FATHER KNEW HE'D BE. I DON'T WANT TO LIVE TO SEE WHAT END THE MONSTER WILL COME TO. FORGIVE ME, FRANK! GOODBYE!"

I'D LOOKED INTO MARK'S EYES, HOPING TO SEE SOME SIGN OF REMORSE. BUT HE'D ONLY SCOWLED AND SMIRKED IN COLD INDIFFERENCE...

MOTHER'D LEFT EVERYTHING TO ME, BUT, THOUGH MY HATRED FOR MARK WAS GREAT, I SHARED EVERYTHING WITH HIM ... EVEN MY POPULARITY. EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE DESPISED HIM, HE WAS INVITED EVERYWHERE WITH ME...

THAT WAS FOUR MONTHS AGO. I WAS TWENTY-EIGHT WHEN I MET ALICE. I HAD THE SAME LONGINGS AS ANY MAN MY AGE...TO BE MARRIED... TO LOVE...TO BE LOVED...

I'D FALLEN IN LOVE WITH ALICE BENSON... HEAD OVER HEELS. ON THE WAY HOME FROM THE PARTY, I TOLD MARK...

SEE HER! I DON'T CARE! I'LL COOPERATE! GO OUT WITH HER ANYTIME YOU WANT! JUST GET WISE! SHE'S ONLY INTERESTED IN YOUR MONEY.. NOT YOU, FRANK!
YOU'RE WRONG, MARK! ALICE ISN'T LIKE THAT!

ALICE AND I HAD SEEN A GOOD DEAL OF EACH OTHER BEFORE I COULD BRING MYSELF TO PROPOSE TO HER. UP TO THAT TIME, MARK HAD SHOWN NO INTEREST IN HER, AND ALICE HAD ACTED AS IF MARK DIDN'T EVEN EXIST. BUT WHEN I ASKED...

MARK HAD INTERRUPTED OUR TENDER LOVE SCENE. HE SHOVED ME ASIDE, GRABBED ALICE...

HE'D TRIED TO KISS HER. BECAUSE ALICE WAS MINE, MARK WANTED HER...

MARK'S STRONG HANDS HAD FLOWN TO ALICE'S THROAT, CUTTING OFF HER AIR...CRUSHING. I FOUGHT VAINLY TO BREAK HIS HOLD...

SHE WAS DEAD. MARK HAD KILLED HER. HE'D EVEN SIGNED A FULL CONFESSION. HE'D KNOWN THEY COULDN'T DO A THING TO HIM...THAT HE WAS BEYOND THE LAW. JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO, WE CAME HOME FROM THAT COURTROOM...

FOR ALL THESE YEARS, YOU'VE HAD A HOLD ON ME. YOU'VE DEFIED EVERY LAW OF DECENCY ONLY BECAUSE THE DECENT PEOPLE DIDN'T WANT TO HURT ME...
C'MON! I NEED A SHAVE!

...AND I STOOD BESIDE MARK AS HE LATHERED HIS FACE AND WIELDED HIS STRAIGHT-RAZOR AS COOLY AND AS CALMLY AS IF NOTHING HAD EVER HAPPENED...

WHAT'LL WE DO TONIGHT, FRANK? HOW ABOUT A SHOW?
YOU'RE BEYOND THE LAW, MARK! BUT JUST THE SAME YOU... YOU'VE GOT TO BE PUNISHED FOR MURDER!

...AND I TOOK MY STRAIGHT-RAZOR AS MARK LAUGHED...

YOU GOING TO KILL ME, FRANK? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH! YOU HAVEN'T THE GUTS! HOW? HOW COULD YOU KILL ME?
LIKE THIS, MARK!
...AND I SLIT MY OWN THROAT!

NOW I LIE BESIDE MARK, MY LIFE EBBING AWAY WITH EACH SCARLET DROP THAT OOZES FROM MY SLASHED THROAT. AND I KNOW THAT JUSTICE IS DONE. FOR JUST AS SURELY AS IN LIFE, SO IN DEATH, MARK AND I WILL BE INSEPARABLE. FOR IT IS MARK'S LIFE'S BLOOD TOO, THAT GUSHES FROM MY WOUND...

AND SO IT IS WITH SIAMESE TWINS!

THE END

RGK
— IN THE RUINS — 2160 —

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